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# NEGROES IN BRITAIN

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# NEGROES IN BRITAIN

*A STUDY OF RACIAL RELATIONS  
IN ENGLISH SOCIETY*

by

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LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRUBNER & CO., LTD.

BROADWAY HOUSE: 68-74 CARTER LANE, E.C.4.

*First published 1947*

THIS BOOK IS PRODUCED IN COMPLETE  
CONFORMITY WITH THE AUTHORIZED  
ECONOMY STANDARDS

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN  
BY HUNT, BARNARD AND CO., LTD., LONDON AND AYLESBURY

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## PREFACE

My general purpose in undertaking this work was to examine the social interactions and reactions resulting from the presence of coloured people in Britain, choosing as a specific example a coloured community in the dockland of Cardiff. I soon found that my study made it necessary to enter rather deeply into certain aspects of English culture, and especially to review certain historical antecedents. Without doing this it was impossible to provide more than a superficial interpretation of social attitudes and motives which appear not only to play a prominent part in the situation to-day, but to be equally relevant in predicting its future. This point anticipates later methodological considerations, but the extra emphasis may perhaps be pardoned, for it touches on a fundamental problem of theory. If we admit the non-static nature of society as an established fact, then its positive implication—that social behaviour and social forms, past, present, and future, are to be regarded as a continuum—seems methodologically to follow.

Much of my interest in the subject of this work was prompted by personal experience, in company with West African friends, of the working of the Colour Bar in this country. I need hardly add, therefore, that my attitude is affected by sympathy for the victims of this prejudice, and by a considerable amount of irritation with the ideas and factors which underlie it. I am also interested in the world-wide repercussions of a matter about which there is still much apathy and ignorance amongst the British public. It is not widely appreciated, for example, that very many of the future leaders of the British Colonial areas spend two or more years in this country at a most impressionable period of their lives; or that the ideas and notions they obtain here of British people and European ways are likely in the long run to influence some sixty million coloured people abroad. This may be a fact of some significance if, as some, possibly gloomy, prophets predict, the main future political alignments of mankind will form themselves on colour lines.

It seems important for methodological reasons to mention these points. The social scientist who claims that he is employing

the same methods of approach to a problem as the natural scientist incurs a like obligation to assess and describe the condition and efficiency of his instruments. Through unavoidable circumstances the chemist's balance may be slightly biassed, but provided he is aware of this, makes due allowance for it, and above all, warns his reader of his difficulty, no great harm is done. In the present case, so far as I can analyse my own motives, the bias is perhaps less likely to result in a conscious exaggeration of racial incidents in themselves than in an unconscious disregard of mitigating circumstances in the general context.

The further aims of this work, including its opportunities of theoretical treatment, are less likely to affect the methodological issue. They may be stated briefly as follows:

1. To draw the attention of anthropologists in this country in concrete terms to the possibilities of applying their discipline more positively to the study of urban society. The absence, for example, of anything like a sociological study of the class system of Great Britain is a reproach to the social sciences, and so far as anthropologists are concerned, involves the loss of valuable opportunities of preparing for the newer urban problems of the Colonial field. To take an instance from the British colonies, the fact that West African people are absorbing ever more European educational and social traits means that they are entering more and more into a European social system, and must be studied and understood to an increasing extent in terms of that system. Experience of the latter, therefore, is necessary both for analysis and prediction, particularly at the present time, if social anthropology is to continue to justify its claim for consideration by Colonial Administrations. Another danger is already evident, namely, that in the absence of "anthropological" or "sociological" attention, subjects peculiarly suitable for study in this country by scientific methods will be taken over by agencies and individuals less adequately equipped to handle them.

2. To plead, also, for scientific attention to be given to the study of racial relations (or group relations, if the generic term be preferred) in its own right. Many studies of "acculturation" already stand to the credit of British anthropology, but questions which could previously be resolved in terms mainly of the

exchange and mutual acceptance of traits between widely different cultures have altered their form. As the late Professor R. E. Park has pointed out in his Introduction to Dr. D. Pierson's *Negroes in Brazil*, the Colonial problem of yesterday is taking on a fresh shape as the racial and national problem of to-day. In many parts of the British Colonial Empire, particularly in the West Indies, West and East Africa, there is a popular stirring in terms of racial and class loyalties which calls for study with special regard to its social and psychological implications.

This work was accepted for the Doctorate of Philosophy, University of London.

K. L. LITTLE.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In connection with this work, I should like to thank most sincerely Dr. Raymond Firth, Professor of Anthropology in the University of London, for his encouragement and for very many helpful suggestions and much invaluable criticism.

Amongst many others who helped me in various ways and whom I should also like to thank particularly are my wife; Dr. Harold Moody, M.D., B.S., President of the League of Coloured People, for affording me access to the files and publications of the League; members and students of the Workers Educational Association; officials of the Cardiff Corporation; Miss Nancie Sharpe; the Librarian, and members of the Staff of the Cardiff Public Library, and last but not least, many members of the coloured community in Cardiff, whose interest and help in my enquiry require special acknowledgement.





# INTRODUCTION

## CHAPTER I

### THE URBAN COMMUNITY, AND THE METHODOLOGY OF ITS SURVEY

#### I. THE MEANING OF "COMMUNITY"

Community is one of the commonest words in the sociological vocabulary: it is also one of the most difficult to define. Some writers make it practically synonymous with "society"; others confine it to special kinds of aspects of social fact. Thus Maciver, out of the infinite series of social relationships which society includes, prefers to distinguish certain "nuclei of intenser common life", be they cities, nations or tribes, and to think of these as *par excellence* communities.<sup>1</sup> Such a definition permits the term to be further narrowed down to mean any area of common life, small or large—a village or a city. However, to deserve the name "community", says this writer, "the area must be somehow distinguished from further areas, the common life must have some characteristic of its own such that the frontiers of the area have some meaning".<sup>2</sup> Even more important, perhaps, than the geographical and cultural implications thus suggested, is the structural aspect of community. In the common living and intercourse of social beings the community embodies the various ways in which the social life is pursued and organized. It provides the context within which association in respect of common aims and interests takes place and functions.

A community, therefore, is characterized by a common background of experience—the experience of its members in living together and sharing a common social life; but not necessarily by a common background of interest. This means that it is possible to regard a community in two lights. One, the structural, is recognized partly in spatial terms, and partly in

<sup>1</sup> R. M. Maciver, *Community: A Sociological Study*, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.* The meaning intended is obviously a cultural one—manners, traditions, modes of speech, and so on.

terms of a common culture and pattern of behaviour.<sup>1</sup> The second, the functional aspect, is recognizable in the way its associations are grouped and its activities organized. Methodologically, the approach to the first is largely descriptive; to the second, analytical as well.

Modern students of urban sociology have been particularly impressed by the former, the cultural, aspects of community; largely perhaps because, in response to the peculiar mobility of the modern city, interests and aggregates tend to be constructed on lines less easy to disentangle than those of the familiar family and neighbourhood organization of the peasant community. In the urban environment, it has been claimed, the family scarcely exists except in its "conjugal" and severely mutilated form. Even this, the mere nucleus represented by a single household, is barely holding its own in the face of the continuous daily absence of its male head for ten or twelve waking hours out of sixteen, and the temporary or permanent emigration of its younger members to school or to seek work in other districts or towns. Family attitudes and interests, which are the basis of local and neighbourhood unity, are being replaced by a nexus of vocational attitudes and interests based on the specialization of modern industry. Such interests cut across local areas, define themselves spatially as city-wide, and take much of the individual's life out of the family and neighbourhood. Occupational activities over a space of time influence social attitudes and give men an occupational attitude towards life.<sup>2</sup> People who work together at the same tasks meet to exchange ideas, and in time these occupational attitudes create social cleavages. The family's integrative role is usurped more and more by sectional interests—unions, lodges, institutions, whose influence and distribution may be even nation-wide. The very "march of the city", as commerce and industry push out from its centre, encroach upon

<sup>1</sup> These views of community play a large part in the definition by members of the Chicago school, notably H. W. Zorbaugh, cf. : "An area does not become a community merely by having distributed over it a number of people and institutions, or by those people having certain interests in common. Still less does it become a community by virtue of being an administrative or political unit. An area becomes a community only through the common experiences of the people who live in it, resulting in their becoming a cultural group, with traditions, sentiments and attitudes, and memories in common—a focus of belief, feeling and action" (*The Gold Coast and the Slum*, p. 222).

<sup>2</sup> cf. E. S. Bogardus, "The Occupational Attitude." *J. of App. Soc.*, viii, Jan.-Feb. 1924, pp. 170-7.

residential neighbourhoods, and turn the population back upon itself, results in added instability and change, and this in turn has further significant implications for local life. If the city's population is increasing, the subtler influences of sympathy, rivalry and economic necessity tend to control the distribution of its members, and ultimately to determine those congregations of its people, which in terms of the urban definition may be adjudged to qualify as communities.

In the course of time every section and quarter of the city takes on something of the character and qualities of its inhabitants and is inevitably marked with their peculiar sentiments. These more or less separate quarters or sections come into being in a variety of ways. Business and manufacturing concerns seek advantageous locations and draw a certain number of inhabitants around them. Fashionable residential districts spring up from which the poorer classes are excluded because of the increased land value. There grows up, also, slums inhabited by large numbers of the poorer classes who are unable to defend themselves from association with the derelict and vicious.<sup>1</sup> Most great cities have their racial colonies, like the Chinatowns of San Francisco, the coloured districts of New York, and on a rather smaller scale, the dock areas of British cities such as London, Liverpool and Cardiff.

## 2. THE URBAN "CULTURAL AREA"

Every city has its occupational suburbs. Sociologically speaking, the interesting characteristic of these population-sections or communities, apart from the fact that they are mainly composed of persons of the same social and economic class, is that they are accretive rather than endemic. They tend to grow as much by the arrival of fresh immigrants, drawn thither by their economic and other amenities, as by the natural increase in the families which composed the original settlement. Such communities, particularly those of the medium and higher income classes, largely consist of quite discrete family or individual units, conscious of a common economic and cultural background, but

<sup>1</sup> cf. R. E. Park, "Suggestions for the Study of Behaviour in the Urban Environment", *The City*, p. 6.

psychologically as well as physically separated from each other not only by garden walls and fences but by lack of common interests and activities.

Such communities, it might be argued, are fundamentally different from those conventionally dealt with by the anthropologist in a pre-literate society, or, though to a lesser extent, by the investigator in a peasant group. In the latter cases, the family, usually with an extension of consanguineous relatives and other connections, provides the general focus for nearly all interest and activity, and serves as the regulator of social behaviour and the cultural norm. Not only are a very large number of economic as well as social transactions carried out solely in terms of this affinal and consanguineous group, but family attitudes and notions of right and wrong are intrinsically as much a family endowment and a qualification of its members as are industrial techniques and community of material property. The methodological implications of such a situation are very important. By analysing the life of and the sanctions governing a single family or a random series of families in a pre-literate society, the anthropologist has a guide to the structure of that society, and is often enabled to forecast the behaviour of a whole community. Such a procedure is valid, however, only if the community in question provides virtually the whole world of its members. It requires that experience shall exist as a fairly common factor, and above all, that individual interests shall be envisaged basically in terms of the group as a whole.

In the urban environment all these conditions are considerably modified. Individual aims tend to be thought of vocationally rather than socially; experience is the product of diverse and often conflicting opportunities, and, above all, personal values and incentives are often based on sanctions unacceptable to the consanguineous or immediate social group. All this makes the individual family a less suitable criterion of group behaviour, and suggests that the real determinants of life in the urban community lie elsewhere and may be studied more profitably in the peculiar characteristics of industrial society—in economic forces, such as the value of land, or in technical inventions and technological adaptations, such as the screen and the radio.

### 3. METHODOLOGICAL PERMANENCE OF THE "FAMILY"

Despite all this, there are several even more fundamental reasons why the investigator should continue to regard the family and certain of its activities as his base line. For one thing, it is still the only institution with unitary significance for the community as a whole, and moreover, is still capable of producing and exercising social cohesion to a degree which is sometimes more real than might be supposed. The family still retains its role as the primary factor in the widest sense in economic production and consumption, and this means that questions of income and standards of living are best resolved and measured in terms of households rather than of the individuals who compose them. The fact that familial agencies themselves may be taking on an increasingly specialized and standardized character under the impact of newer and more pervasive educational forces tends to modify, but not to alter, the primary psychological situation. It is still within the home, from his parents and his older brothers and sisters, that the individual receives his earliest and in several respects most indelible impressions of the outside world and his relationships with it. However much it may concede to external and material factors and "causes", the urban survey cannot afford to neglect these considerations.

### 4. THE AIM OF ENGLISH SOCIAL SURVEYS

So far as social surveys in Great Britain are concerned, one further point calls for comment. They have been inspired in the main, as Ginsberg remarks, by direct interest in practical reform, and not by any comprehensive theory of society as a whole. Indeed, except in America, such studies have usually been conducted not by sociologists, but by exponents of the special social sciences, such as economists, statisticians, public health officials and the like.<sup>1</sup> A cursory examination of relevant social survey literature supports this observation. Most inquiries have been concerned with the category of social situation popularly known as the "social problem", or what Ginsberg terms social pathology, i.e., the study of social maladjustments and dis-

<sup>1</sup> M. Ginsberg, *Study of Society*: "Problems and Methods of Sociology," p. 439.

turbances and the methods used for dealing with them.<sup>1</sup> Even the most objectively designed survey does not exclude a certain amount of moral judgment (see below), and the motivation of many such enquiries is clearly social rather than sociological. Two British pioneers in social research have stated their position quite clearly:

"The problem in hand is not merely the practical one of the improvement of the environment, but the more fundamental question of how to direct the attention of men and women, and still more of the rising generation, to the natural conditions and social possibilities of the world around them in their own neighbourhood, so that a more informed public spirit may deal more successfully with current evils, and a more vivid imagination be directed to the realization of ideals."<sup>2</sup>

Such a question raises a methodological as well as a utilitarian issue. Granting that both the sociologist and the social reformer have an interest in and recognize the importance of the special or "social" problem, how far can their roles be effectively combined? The sociologist will argue that it is not merely a matter of obtaining as much relevant information on the subject as possible, but of deciding how far the particular problem can usefully be abstracted from its wider social and cultural context. These two aspects of the methodology—the *means* by which the necessary information and data are collected and assembled, and the *manner* in which the specific problem and its implications are resolved—depend to a large extent upon the kind of field under investigation, and for the same reason are worthy of some detailed illustration. Discussing the usual approach in British local surveys, A. F. Wells<sup>3</sup> shows that the main sources of material

<sup>1</sup> *ibid.* A few comments on the interests which prompted most of these surveys will exemplify this point. In most cases their initiation seems to have been due to persons having some personal connection with the area surveyed. Out of 32 cases of general surveys, the initiation was in 13 instances due to a local group, and in 11 instances to an individual personally connected with the locality. In 8 cases the report was apparently not preceded by any special investigation. In 15 cases, the investigation was organized by an individual who generally was not a professional investigator. cf. A. F. Wells, *The Social Survey in Great Britain*.

<sup>2</sup> cf. Branford and Farquharson, *Introduction to Regional Surveys*, p. 7. The practical implications of the British social survey are made very clear in Wells' useful summary (*op. cit.*). He comes to the conclusion that "The aim of the social survey may be said (subject to some reservations) to be the collection of facts relating to some social problems and conditions in order to assist directly or indirectly the formulation of practical measures with reference to such problems . . . and we must note the much wider aims of various community investigations which so far as this country is concerned seems not so much the discovery of facts new to research workers as the making the community mentally and spiritually coherent by self-knowledge" (pp. 42 and 48).

<sup>3</sup> Wells, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-1,

are four: first, the personal experience of the writer; second, the use of available documents, with or without manipulation of statistics; third, special "indirect" investigations (or "mass interview"); fourth, special "direct" or "house to house" investigations.

## 5. TECHNIQUE AND TECHNICAL PROBLEMS

Such a summary is useful in so far as it represents methods employed in the cases under review, but it hardly seems wide enough either practically or theoretically to satisfy all the possibilities and implications of sociological analysis. The collection of data and the choice of the means employed to collect them are an obvious and essential part of the sociologist's work, but even they are not the primary considerations in an aspect of the matter to which, because it seems elementary, insufficient attention is sometimes paid. In the field of social anthropology the *first* problem of the investigator, as Audrey Richards points out,<sup>1</sup> is to make contact with the people studied so that they will be willing either to answer his questions or to allow him to observe; he should even participate in their activities as far as possible. Neglect of this preliminary step may affect the collection of information in two ways. It may make the assembly of data unnecessarily difficult or precarious, or it may denote a definite bias in, or even impart one to, the investigator's attitude to his material. The actual methods of collecting material are usually spoken of as the technique. Their corner-stone in any kind of field work is still the personal interview; but the less direct evaluation of persons, families, objects, etc., by noting what the subjects say in the context of their daily life, as well as the context of their conversation and their spontaneous reactions, is hardly less important. When the communities concerned are literate, questionnaires may be addressed to, and biographies and autobiographies sought from them. It is useful also to make direct observations on behaviour, noting what happened, how the people concerned comported themselves, and who the actors were on specific occasions and in specific circumstances.

<sup>1</sup> cf. A. I. Richards, "The Development of Field Work Methods in Social Anthropology", *Study of Society*, pp. 272-316.

## 6. "ANTHROPOLOGICAL" V. "SOCIOLOGICAL" METHODS

One of the major difficulties of the anthropologist often is how to attain a condition of "oneness" with the people he is studying, and to gain acceptance into their (tribal) circle. This consideration provides a convenient point of transition from "anthropological" to "sociological" study,<sup>1</sup> in so far as the methods and procedure of the former, as advocated by various social anthropologists, differ in kind from those of the latter. It is barely possible, for example, that a sociologist studying a community in his own society should be culturally as alien to them as an anthropologist to a society of pre-literate Melanesians. Yet, despite all its very considerable advantages, cultural identity is not wholly beneficial from the point of view of research. Sometimes, easier means of access and better opportunities of social intercourse are available only at the expense of objectivity and of a neglect of significant features because of their association with the obvious and everyday.

The main advantage of the "civilized" subject of study lies, however, in its enabling material, particularly of the contextual kind, to be accumulated much more rapidly. Whereas the anthropologist may be obliged to build up most of his factual background through the laborious medium of the interview, the sociologist usually has the same kind of information, to a lavish extent, already to hand in official documents and reports, and other records. Not only has he the appreciable guidance of historical events to safeguard him as well as to stimulate his further course, but from the "sociological" point of view, interviewing, and even more delicate methods of interpretation, may be as much a means of checking previously accumulated information as of extracting hitherto unknown facts about a given situation. He has at his disposal, as a rule, not only the advantage of his subjects' and informants' literacy, but the even greater blessing of linguistic certainty in his communications with them. On this much firmer basis he is not obliged, as a scientist, merely to scratch at the factual surface of the more complicated psycho-

<sup>1</sup> Taking "anthropological" for the moment as concerned with the pre-literate, and "sociological" with the Western and contemporary, field of society.



logical factors underlying certain items of cultural behaviour.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, in observing behaviour and noting conversation and conversation patterns, there is no great dissimilarity between the two techniques. Nevertheless, in the sociological case, as Firth points out, it is more necessary to adhere to statistical principles of random sampling. Whereas the investigator of the smaller, less differentiated community may reasonably expect a fairly representative and reliable expression of public opinion and psychological attitudes from the cross-sections he deals with in his ordinary routine, the larger and more involved modern city community represents considerable diversity of interest between its frequently conflicting economic, occupational, and vocational elements. For this reason, too, both the increased sophistication of the situation and the subject itself require that the interview technique, in particular, should be applied with a more subtle regard for its verbal and other implications.<sup>2</sup>

## 7. THE INTERVIEW

The interview, indeed, remains the chief standby of the investigator. Writing of its technique and application "in the field", Nadel<sup>3</sup> points out that the anthropologist usually employs it exclusively to obtain information about the "objective facts"

<sup>1</sup> Particularly when interpreting psychological attitudes and behaviour, which usually requires a very great degree of familiarity on the investigator's part with the implications of tone, use of words, and other verbal and cultural idiosyncrasies in the society studied. It is doubtful if the more delicate *nuances* of expression can be *scientifically* acquired within the scope of the ordinary field investigation lasting merely one or two years, despite the fact that some workers show little hesitation in laying claim to them.

<sup>2</sup> Raymond Firth, "An Anthropologist's View of Mass Observation," *Soc. Rev.*, 1938. Firth suggests that the true analysis of "interest" may be approached better in terms of the actual wording of the reply than in those of the opinion actually expressed. For example, in the analysis of "interest in crises" (*Britain by Mass-Observation*) at the end of August, 1938, 460 people were asked if their interest in crises was increasing or decreasing. Mass-Observation came to the conclusion that "the important point to notice is that the largest group here is that which is feeling a definite decreasing interest in crises". Ten typical replies in the "decreasing" group were quoted, and five of them included the following statements:—

1. "Decreasing, so much so that I dislike listening to the News."
2. "Decreasing interest; it's too blasted uncomfortable."
3. "Decreasing, because the helplessness of the individual appals me."
4. "Makes me sick to open a paper."
5. "If people start talking about another war, I feel like saying 'For goodness' sake, shut up!'"

<sup>3</sup> cf. S. F. Nadel, "The Interview Technique in Social Anthropology," *The Study of Society*, pp. 317–27.

of culture and society, the person interviewed being assigned the role of an informant. He considers that this "objective" reality with which the anthropologist is concerned is a social reality, and that the informant and his responses are themselves elements and factors in it.<sup>1</sup> For this reason, he stresses the importance of observation even in the interview itself, for observation can be used to check information obtained by interviews, and interviews to obtain information about facts which have been or are being observed. Moreover, in the intensive type of interview designed to elicit a coherent account of a practice, the attention and interest of the informant must be stimulated and maintained, for it rarely happens that both interviewer and informant are inspired by the single motive of scientific interest. Nor, in the opinion of this writer, is the informant's sophistication necessarily helpful in arriving at objective reality, since any preconceived ideas he may possess on the specific topic may "blur" the problem rather than assist in its elucidation. On the other hand, the stimulation desired may be effected by the deliberate introduction of controversial topics; while it is sometimes profitable to employ the leading question as such.

## 8. THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire, rarely used in the conventional anthropological field, also serves a purpose. It may range all the way from a list of general questions which the subjects answer by writing descriptive essays ("open" type) to the ballot paper ("closed" type), consisting of one or two more specific questions, each followed by a set of possible answers, the subject merely marking the answer he prefers. Its aim is to enquire into attitude and experience, and the development of social, political and other sentiments. Certain difficulties are, however, attached to its use, the most obvious being that of framing questions incapable of an ambiguous reply. Others are the risk of subjectivity in its form, a possible lack of frankness on the part of the subject, his

<sup>1</sup> *ibid.* W. I. Thomas has amplified this point as follows: "A social institution can be understood (and modified) only if we do not limit ourselves to the study of its formal organization, but analyse the way in which it appears to the personal experience of various members of the group, and follow the influence which it has on their lives," cf. *The Unadjusted Girl*, p. 244.

lack of time, difficulty in formulating replies, and even over-enthusiasm or suspicion, or reading some unforeseen meaning into the questions. Perhaps an even greater objection to the questionnaire lies in possible misconstruction by the investigator of a subject's open answer; herein, as a check on this, lies the importance of the sociological and empirical approach.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, to a somewhat limited extent the questionnaire has its uses, mainly perhaps in providing access to a far wider section of public opinion than an examination of individual attitudes could hope to reach by any other means. Granted that the principles of random sampling are observed, the large statistical sample has the further advantage of overcoming several sources of error which are frequently held to invalidate such methods; for errors due to carelessness and over-conscientiousness, reticence and exhibitionism tend in the mass to cancel one another out. It is only those influences that affect the majority of the group in the same way, e.g. the bias towards respectability, which are liable to mislead. Vernon thinks that three preliminary conditions are desirable before setting the questionnaire: (a) the investigator should "soak" himself in the field of enquiry and discuss it with many persons of divergent opinions before attempting to formulate specific questions; (b) the formulations should be undertaken jointly by several people all familiar with the

<sup>1</sup> Firth, *op. cit.*, quotes in illustration of this a further mis-reading on the part of Mass-Observation. In a survey on the danger of war, 1,100 people were asked: "On what do you base your opinion?" Mass-observation interpreted the material thus:—

"Answers showed us:

	%
"Newspapers . . . . .	35
Friends . . . . .	17
Radio . . . . .	13
'Own opinion' . . . . .	8
Recent history or travel . . . . .	8
Books . . . . .	5
Other factors (instinct, observation, human nature, etc.) . . . . .	10
Negative . . . . .	4

"Newspapers, therefore, easily lead in importance among the factors that make opinion." In such an interpretation, as Firth points out, two kinds of sociological fact are merged—the informant's impression of the role which newspapers and the other factors mentioned play in moulding his opinion, and the real extent to which they do so. Mass-observation has turned the statistics of the first phenomenon into a positive generalization about the second. "Yet," Firth concludes, "for this to be legitimate certain assumptions have to be made, such as, that the people questioned were able to differentiate clearly between the real effects of the factors mentioned; and were not influenced by some specific recent experience—a family row about politics, a film they had just seen . . . a fortune-teller's description of them as 'strong-minded'."

field; (c) the questionnaire should be tried out on a small number of people before general distribution.<sup>1</sup>

## 9. DOCUMENTARY RECORDS AND OTHER MATERIAL

Like the questionnaire, the biographical or autobiographical type of record is a source of information almost exclusive to the sociological survey. Personal records, diaries, correspondence, case studies, etc., throw light in the first place upon the personality development of the subject, but also upon his social group and the institutions which have influenced that development. Shaw's study of juvenile delinquency provides an outstanding example of this in the shape of a record written by one of his subjects.<sup>2</sup> Essays, and writings of a non-biographical type, also afford many possibilities of analysis. These are usually less self-conscious, and though they give less direct clue to the nature of social influence as shown by prejudices, rationalisations and so on, common in the personal record, they afford a useful estimate of the general cultural influence. The deliberate setting of an essay on a given theme, when practicable, has likewise its uses, as has also the problem story or situation. Obviously these media represent more specialized techniques, and their value as well as their use may be largely dependent on the nature of the problem concerned.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the whole subject of literary and other overt sources of material and information raises questions which, perhaps, are best treated under the general heading of methodology. In the contemporary community it is obvious that many external factors are operative which are common to all civilised society rather than peculiar to any one section of it. These include the daily newspaper, the film, the popular novel and periodical, the radio, etc., and the colour which they impart, whether cultural or social, has also to be taken into account in the general appraisal.

<sup>1</sup> P. E. Vernon, "Questionnaires, Attitude Tests, and Rating Scales," *Study of Society*, pp. 199-229.

<sup>2</sup> C. R. Shaw, *The Jack Roller: A Study in Delinquency*. Another investigator who has made great use of this kind of instrument with F. Znaniecki is W. I. Thomas (see his *Unadjusted Girl* and, more particularly, *The Polish Peasant in America*).

<sup>3</sup> Vernon, *op. cit.* Some effective use of these methods was made by the Lynds in their study of Middletown (see below) in the shape of newspaper cuttings, articles, etc.

## 10. DEFINING THE PROBLEM

With this consideration in mind we can turn to the broader implications of the methodology proper, regarding the interview, questionnaires, literary records, etc., as the main and most appropriate tools of enquiry. Here, there can be no hesitation in saying, is involved the investigator's general *modus operandi*, the manner in which he views and states his problem and his method of approaching it. In some situations, of which those whose ramifications are mainly economic are the best example, the approach may be very much on quantitative lines. In other cases, where social relations and behaviour are the chief consideration, a purely descriptive, or at best typological, approach may be the more satisfactory method. It has to be remembered that methodology includes the re-statement of a situation as well as the statement of the facts relevant to it. Precise rules, in consequence, are very difficult to formulate, and would seem to depend, if survey material is any criterion, on the personal interests and qualifications of the investigator and on the nature of the problem, rather than on any rigidly prescribed basis. In the circumstances, therefore, a short comparative study of the problems attempted and the methodology pursued will probably be more helpful than generalizations of, so far, unproved validity.

## 11. SOME BRITISH METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

We have already remarked that sociological enquiry in this country has been undertaken mainly in terms of the "social problem".<sup>1</sup> Investigators in this category include Charles Booth and his successors, B. S. Rowntree, the Tyneside investigators, and many others, concerned for the most part with the enumeration of persons living in poverty in London and other towns, and the degree of and reasons for their poverty. In attempting to answer such questions, Booth addressed most of his enquiries to

<sup>1</sup> One of the tantalising features of this type of enquiry is that from the sociological angle it often opens up more problems than it solves. For example, the Merseyside Survey provides a very interesting analysis of immigration into the district. The enquiry covers only place of origin and economic and occupational status, but could profitably be extended into the cultural background and problems of cultural adjustment of the groups.

School Attendance Officers in order to ascertain the incomes of the parents of all children of school age, and on the principle of random sampling arrived at a number of income classes or categories. Rowntree, who followed him in this type of study, made direct enquiries into such matters as rent and household necessities as well as income. Both Booth and Rowntree took the abstract concept of poverty and set about re-stating it in the purely quantitative language of income and expenditure. In addition to his estimate of "primary" and "secondary" poverty, Rowntree concerned himself with the factors associated with the state of poverty. He therefore made an analysis of relevant conditions, for example housing, dividing houses into three categories: those occupied by the well-to-do artisan, the four-room type occupied by families in receipt of moderate but regular wages, and those in the poorest districts—the typical "slum" dwellings. Rowntree also attempted to relate poverty to health standards, analysing such data as vital statistics, the family budget, and the interrelation of weight and height. He dealt also in more descriptive terms with a number of more sociological features, such as public-houses and clubs, education, the influence of the Christian churches, trade unionism, co-operation, etc., in order to provide a general picture of the conditions which govern the lives of the working-class community of York.

Rowntree's approach is essentially factual, consisting in the accumulation of a fairly large amount of material which he judged to be of interest to his central problem. Actually it is a study, not so much of town life, as its author calls it, as, of the economic factors which underlie and determine the physical aspects of that life. The "poorer" classes are methodologically isolated from the social structure as a whole, and there is little or no attempt to elucidate the part they play in the general scheme of social and psychological incentives.

Much the same might be said of other important British surveys, and to some extent of the extensive new London survey<sup>1</sup> of some years back. This was carried out by the London School of Economics as a continuation of the earlier Booth survey, and its results, issued in nine volumes, give much interesting sociological as well as purely factual information regarding modern society. Many of Booth's methods were employed. There is an elaborate

<sup>1</sup> *New Survey of London Life and Labour*, King, 1930-35.

use of maps to denote the classification of London's population street by street in social and economic grades.<sup>1</sup> Industrial organization, occupations, and the features associated with them, such as rates of pay, trade practices, trade unionism and its effect, labour recruitment and training, etc., are extensively treated. The economic results of technical mechanization, its effect on working hours and casual employment, and the scale of employment are also described, but rather as isolated phenomena than as part of the general cultural context. Various social problems are treated in much the same quantitative way, and delinquency, crime, etc., seem to be looked upon rather as peculiar pathological traits than of aspects of a wider cultural pattern.<sup>2</sup> Curiously enough, this view is something implicit in the Survey's own remarks.<sup>3</sup> One or two specific sections, however, throw direct and original light on institutional and sociological features, mainly, it would seem, as a result of empirical methods.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Compare this plotting of social and economic areas with the American "ecological" approach, which tends to regard such areas as cultural rather than economic concepts.

<sup>2</sup> C. R. Shaw advances a succinct sociological comment on this approach when he points out that although it has been quite common in discussions of delinquency to attribute causal significance to such conditions as poor housing, overcrowding, low living and educational standards and so on, these conditions themselves probably reflect a type of community life. In treating them one is treating only the symptoms of more basic processes. Even the disorganized family and the delinquent gang, which are often thought of as the main factors in delinquency, probably reflect community situations. (*Delinquency Areas*, Univ. of Chic., p. 205.)

<sup>3</sup> For example: "Gambling . . . to-day is a widespread habit, it arises from failures and shortcomings in our social life of a more fundamental nature. . . . If we are to deal with these deep-seated dangers, of which the gambling habit is merely one expression, we shall have to adventure in a far wider and more difficult field. Anything less than this may mean little more than a change of arena, as when gambling is transferred from horses to dogs, or from the race-course to the Stock Exchange; or of vogue, as when one vice or malpractice gives way to another not necessarily less harmful."

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, the investigation into the drinking habit. Visits were paid to some 620 public houses all over London, and in the words of the Survey—"in these visits the information sought and obtained naturally varied according to circumstances and opportunities and a rigid routine of observation was adhered to throughout." A large number of conversations with barmen and customers were undertaken, and counts were taken to provide some sort of quantitative check on the impressions received. Access to the books of three or four apparently representative houses acted as a further check on these impressions, and help was also received from the Trade and its critics. The main subjects of conversation were noted, then roughly confirmed by counts of the people talking, and finally accepted when they had been tried out on three or four public-house customers and landlords. By these means an estimate was obtained of the amount of beer drunk, the proportion of income spent on it, drinking habits by beverage, age and sex, the extent of home drinking, the psychological attitude towards drunkenness and the position of the pawnshop in this connection. The general environment of the public-house was also assessed; what compartments there were and who occupied them,

In other respects this survey is less stimulating from the sociological angle; the reader is left in large measure to surmise for himself the social attitudes and everyday habits of 20th-century Londoners, and is offered relatively little insight into the cultural subtleties which affect their lives and outlook.<sup>1</sup> The implication is, perhaps, that the social tendencies of the contemporary world are so well known as to render further elucidation superfluous. Even if such a generalization were true, the value of the work as a historical document would have been much enhanced by the inclusion of further relevant material.

It is unnecessary to elaborate on this matter in view of the general absence from British surveys of what may be regarded as proper social material, i.e. information respecting people's everyday habits and customs. Fairly recently, an attempt was made by the originators of "Mass-Observation" to remedy this by means of a number of national as well as local surveys. The earlier work of this body up to 1940, already mentioned, has been criticized from the anthropological point of view by Firth,<sup>2</sup> and as some of his main conclusions are quoted on previous pages, it is unnecessary to recapitulate more than the general method of Mass-Observation, which lies largely in the application of so-called anthropological technique ("participant-observer") by members of the public. More recently still, Charles Madge, one of the original Mass-Observationists, has been carrying out a number of surveys on war-time spending habits in various towns and districts of this country, the estimate being made chiefly by the method of direct enquiry.<sup>3</sup> As this work is concerned, however, with a particular aspect of community life rather than with its general activities, it does not immediately enter the scope of the present review. We may proceed therefore to consider survey material in the United States of America.

how orders were given, and what kinds of games were played. Finally, the institutional effects of the public-house received attention; its position as a community centre, as an organizer of social activities, the personality of the landlord, and one or two less directly related features.

<sup>1</sup> The only deliberate attempt to obtain such material (apart, perhaps, from the above-mentioned study of the Public-house) consisted in inviting essays from members of the lower income groups, small prizes being offered, and a general indication given of the more important topics to be included. Even granting the discrimination of the investigator, the significance of material obtained in this way is likely to be limited.

<sup>2</sup> *op. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> Chas. Madge, "War-time Saving and Spending," *Econ. Jnl.*, vol. xii, 1938-9, pp. 327-9.



## 12. THE CHICAGO SCHOOL

In very general terms the American point of view and methodology is perhaps best expressed by C. R. Shaw, a prominent member of the Chicago Sociological School, whose studies of delinquency provide an effective counterpart to the earlier work of Burt in this country. "Behaviour can be studied profitably in terms of the situation out of which it arises; in other words, behaviour responses can be thought of as functions of situation."<sup>1</sup> In terms of the urban community, other Chicago sociologists and their imitators interpret this approach in various ways, some of which were mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. The "ecologists",<sup>2</sup> in particular, postulate that the study of behaviour in the city involves consideration of various competitive and economic processes which in turn are responsible for the production of "natural areas", and for the segregation in them of the urban population. These areas are also community areas, but they are cultural and not social units, since their inhabitants engage in "no common group of activities out of which may grow a common body of experience and a common set of traditions and attitudes", which is the *sine qua non* of community life and collective action. Members of such communities are sorted out and segregated there by the more subtle processes which determine the utilisation of land and fix the amount of rents. These processes, in turn, are the criteria which decide both the nature and the location of the community area, and each such area contains people alike in their general habits and customs, but subject to a greater or less degree of individuation of personal behaviour.<sup>3</sup>

Put briefly, the kernel of the "ecological" thesis is that an urban survey, as distinct from that of a village, means the study

<sup>1</sup> cf. H. W. Zorbaugh, *op. cit.*, p. 231. "The structure of the individual city then . . . is built about this framework of transportation, business organization and industry, park and boulevard systems and topographical features. All these tend to break up the city into numerous smaller areas, which we may call *natural areas*, in that they are unplanned, natural products of the city's growth."

<sup>2</sup> The use of this term is justified by Lundberg and Petersen (*Trends in American Sociology*, p. 279) in the following words:

"The plant or animal ecologist studies the organism in its relation to the environment, watching it behave and noting what affects its behaviour. Finding so many parallels, the student of human communities has ventured to 'lift' much of the vocabulary of plant and animal ecology."

<sup>3</sup> Compare also R. E. Park, "Suggestions for the Study of Behaviour in the Urban Environment," *op. cit.*, pp. 6 and 12.

of a number of separate communities—communities within a greater community—and is complicated by the exaggerated mobility of the city, its diversity of occupations and vocations, and the unlikelihood of any communal action except in the political and administrative sense. Positively, therefore, the study of behaviour in the city—as a function of the peculiar elements of an urban environment—becomes largely a study of the features which most affect it, such as economic competition, transport facilities, and technical and technological changes.<sup>1</sup> Zorbaugh, in his *Gold Coast and Slum*, accepts this, but lays, or appears to lay, greater stress on the cultural conception of the “natural area”. The methodology of his survey of the Chicago Near North Side, comprising some 90,000 inhabitants, proceeds *ex hypothesi* from the latter angle. It provides a suggestive rather than a convincing approach, and is more valuable as an illumination of contemporary American morals than as a fresh method of analysis.<sup>2</sup> A few quotations will make this judgment clearer.

One of these “natural areas” comprises the Rooming House quarter, inhabited mostly by young and adventurous people who have come to the city to seek their fortunes. Here the transitory nature of city life is at least as marked as anywhere else; for presently these people will move to take their places somewhere in the broad cadre of occupations offered by the city, becoming incorporated into the social and economic order about them. “Towertown” is another such community. It is the bohemian or Latin quarter; its inhabitants are mainly artists and students, those who seek a “bohemian” life. This area supports most of the little theatres, the smart bookshops, and the bohemian and radical clubs. There is everywhere an atmosphere of dilettantism and emotional empiricism.

This kind of classification exemplifies, though with bare justice, Zorbaugh’s approach to his subject, which is essentially descriptive, at times intuitive, and to a certain extent typological

<sup>1</sup> cf. M. A. Alihan, *Social Ecology* (*passim*), who offers a fairly extensive commentary on the work of this school. “Competition,” he writes, “then emerges as a key to the understanding of the concept ‘community’; it is thought of by the ecologists as the most fundamental process in human organization and ‘community’ is regarded as its product.” It is the view of this commentator that Park stresses the biological significance of the concept, whereas McKenzie leans towards an essentially economic interpretation (p. 29).

<sup>2</sup> Such studies as Alihan mentions of other members of the school, such as Thrasher, Cavan, and Petersen, stand on their own merits as general sociological rather than specifically ecological works.

in the manner of the English and American personality study schools.<sup>1</sup> The investigators of the New London Survey classify "natural areas" in terms of income, Zorbaugh in terms of customs and ways of behaving, sometimes arbitrarily defined. Perhaps the greatest merit of the study consists in its very ample documentation and its description of leisure-class manners—a subject virtually neglected as such in British social studies since the days of Mayhew.<sup>2</sup> As a survey in the conventional sense of the word, Zorbaugh's work departs from many of the usual canons, for reasons already mentioned; it is less of a survey of a city community than a series of community surveys. Relatively speaking, the quantitative material offered is small in extent, and much of it, in terms of pin-pointed maps, seems to be advanced mainly to support his cultural hypothesis. Zorbaugh's canvas, however, is a wide one, and the extensive use he makes of biographical and other documentary records is responsible for the somewhat "atmospheric", even literary, impression which it gives.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, it would be unfair to suggest that his broader sociological conclusions are necessarily invalidated by the seeming facility of this description and typification. Given the rather arbitrary basis of his approach, he makes a number of shrewd observations in regard to the "dynamic" aspects of the society in question. Moreover, so far as the detection of social motives and cultural patterns is concerned, it might well be argued from this study that the restrictions imposed by a quantitative approach cause far more to be lost in empiricism than is gained in exactitude.

<sup>1</sup> In the anthropological sense it might be fair to include it in the same species as the work of Benedict and other members of the "Culture patterns" school. On the other hand, it has to be remembered that convergence in this respect occurs more in terms of effect than of purpose.

<sup>2</sup> Zorbaugh's description of the "Social Ritual", in particular, seems to be based on some first-class biographical material, see *op. cit.*, p. 57 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> Compare amongst other similar passages the following description of the "Slum": "Dirty and narrow streets, alleys piled high with refuse and alive with dogs and cats, goats hitched to carts, bleak tenements, the smoke of industry hanging in a haze, the marker along the curb, foreign names on shops and foreign faces in the streets, the dissonant cry of the huckster and peddler, the clanging and rattling of railroads and the elevator, the pealing of bells of the great Catholic churches, the music of marching bands and the crackling of fireworks on feast days, the occasional dull boom of a bomb, or the bark of a revolver, the shouts of children at play in the streets, a strange staccato speech, the taste of soot, and the smell of the gas from the huge 'gas house'."

The only reasonable parallel in British sociological literature is, perhaps, H. Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor* published in 1861 (Griffin Bohn) in 4 volumes.

## 13. "MIDDLETOWN"

A few comments on the well-known Middletown survey will complete this very brief review of American methodology. Robert and Helen Lynd, who carried out this study of "contemporary American culture", had the help of a number of trained assistants, and selected a city which, having many features in common with a wide group of communities, provided an opportunity of observing synchronously the trends of life in small American cities. The fundamental aim was to record observed phenomena, and thereby to raise questions and suggest possible fresh points of departure in the study of group behaviour. In view of the multifarious nature of the problem, attention was paid mainly to a few major lines of activity, basic to human society in general, i.e. getting a living; making a home; training the young; using leisure in various forms of play, art, etc.; engaging in religious practices; and community activities. The Lynds' avowed methodology is essentially anthropological both in theoretical approach and in the practical task of amassing data. It was necessary to view their culture in terms of its present functional aspect, and to postulate and reconstruct something of its historical background, so as to provide a basis for comparison with its present nature and a means of tracing and assessing certain developmental elements in its existing pattern.

A summary of the findings in respect of the first activity specified will suffice to illustrate the descriptive and analytical approach. The dominance of getting a living as a cultural factor is shown in percentage terms of the entire community. The working group is divided into two arbitrarily defined sections, the working class and the business class. The former address their activities to things, e.g. by applying tools to materials; the latter to persons, e.g. by selling ideas, things and services. The hours of work are considered, and the economic implications of the age-group, both in terms of increasing or decreasing prosperity and in professional and occupational preferences. There are further data regarding the working population, their intellectual capacity, their provenance, and their degree of emigration. After the manufacturing processes and the part the individual plays in them and in the commercial or business

life have been considered, further information shows some of the trends and changes in the nature and tempo of economic activity, and the extent of vocational selection. The times at which the different sections of the community rise, the hours they work, the implications of day and night work, and the psychological attitudes and tendencies which respond to technological change, unemployment, etc., are shown in terms of personal routine, habits, clothing, food, the question of wives taking employment, the renting of cheaper houses, etc. Finally, the cost of living, and the earnings by age and occupation are assessed, and a descriptive estimate given of the implications of the economic activity and its fruits in terms of social status and prestige. The other five main "trunk" activities are dealt with in similar fashion.

Although this brief summary necessarily emphasises the factual nature of the Lynds' approach, it does not overestimate the deliberate and extensive accumulation of social "facts" which is perhaps the most striking characteristic of the survey. Data of the documentary kind ranged from the census and trade reports to the popular magazine and daily newspapers. Much use was made of the formal interview, largely of a type hardly distinct from the technique of journalism. Individuals would be selected as random samples, the purpose of the investigators frankly revealed to them and an appointment made—more often with the higher income groups, for much of the indirect information was apparently gathered from housewives and others in the working-class group. A wide use was made of the questionnaire, not only to obtain purely factual information, but to invite the recipients to co-operate in assessing numerous psychological attitudes and sentiments in their own lives.

This methodology must be considered in terms of its purpose. It was aimed, in the Lynds' own words, at the integration of diverse régimes of behaviour rather than at the discovery of new material in a narrowly isolated field. The survey dealt with some 30,000 people living in a highly industrialised environment. The approach was factual, and the technique of enquiry mainly direct once the situation had been anthropologically resolved. The result provides a picture which is both historical and sociological. It tells us more about what things people do and what opinions they hold than about why they do them or hold them. It tells us what changes have taken place in the last generation

or so; for example, work is still sought under the *laissez-faire* system of the last century, whereas in another aspect of the economic field, the technique of the present century is used to persuade the citizens to purchase goods. But we are not told why this discrepancy exists. In some respects, therefore, the Lynd methodology is not dissimilar from that used in the London surveys. The results of the respective studies, however, belie any such comparison. *Middletown* is contextual enough and provides enough social material to allow of reasonable deductions as to cultural factors and influences. The limitations of the *British work* in this respect have already been pointed out.

#### 14. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A few tentative remarks only are needed to conclude this short examination of survey methods. The relation of the methodology to the problem studied is of fundamental importance, and has been illustrated by most of the instances quoted. On the other hand, the validity of the methodological *modus operandi*, a derivative of the general approach, is difficult to estimate except from a rather full consideration of a given problem. Quantitative methods are, perhaps, less open to suspicion than any other, but even here there are pitfalls. A careful and unimpeachable statistical analysis of economic data does not necessarily and of itself give statistical results the status of social facts. Nor are conclusions arrived at by the collection of seemingly straightforward household material—the family budget is a good example—always as valid as their formulators sometimes seem to imagine. It is doubtful if the direct method always evokes reliable information on various practices less socially approved, such as drinking, gambling, and illicit sexual behaviour. Yet in the small income such items may be significant.<sup>1</sup> This does not at all mean that direct questioning should be deprecated. When the information required can be obtained directly, it is mere

<sup>1</sup> For example, in some of the “poorer” districts of Merseyside, so the writer is informed, it was the practice of the young worker regularly to hold back a shilling or two of his weekly earnings for the satisfaction of his sexual urges. The act and the transaction would be casual and informal and take place in one of the back entries or alleys with which this particular district is honeycombed. It is equally doubtful if anything like a correct estimate has been made of weekly expenditure on various kinds of gambling of the casual as well as the institutionalized kind.

affectation, as well as a considerable and unnecessary labour, to obtain it in any other way. In the large-scale enquiry, and where the application of statistical methods is envisaged, the direct approach is necessary as well as economical, but it should never be thought of as sufficient in itself. It requires supplementing by less ostentatious checks, by ear and by eye as well as by verbal enquiry, and even by deduction from other known or observable material. In so far as the primary obligation of the investigator is to provide as accurate a description as possible of the community studied, every method bearing on this end has its appropriate place as well as its limitations. The questionnaire, for example, is likely to shed more light on group opinions and attitudes at a given time than on the factors and forces which motivate or modify them. The very literacy of the urban community, which makes it in some ways more amenable to approach than the pre-literate society, conceals complexities which correspondingly can be over-simplified, and may require a quite elaborate psychological technique for their disentanglement.<sup>1</sup>

In the urban field, the investigator is confronted with situations, with problems, and not least with individual persons whose understanding and manipulation require a degree of tact, skill and practical experience far beyond the compass of mere academic learning. If special training and a facility for making contacts are regarded as a prerequisite for work in the anthropological field, they should be held no less necessary and essential qualifications for sociological research. Special knowledge in the latter case may, or may not, mean a close familiarity with sociological theory; it should certainly include some kind of relevant vocational experience of life,<sup>2</sup> and a considerable amount of pre-knowledge

<sup>1</sup> Several suggestions on socio-psychological lines have been made by C. F. Bartlett. One is the story whose dénouement is supplied by members of the audience to whom it is told. An extension of this technique, and one which offers wide if rather cumbersome possibilities of group treatment, has been tried by H. Carmichael. A situation possessing some highly dramatic or controversial quality is put forward in a literary form and the subjects are asked to suggest various lines of action which the characters in it might take, and to state what factors in the situation are likely to play most part in its development.

The purpose of both these techniques seems to be an elementary form of "psycho-analysis" on a wide scale with the object of estimating the relative importance of various cultural factors and considerations in the minds of the groups investigated, and hence, presumably, their "objective" significance in a given society. The possibilities of the latter technique, except in a much cruder form, would seem to be restricted to a highly literate and relatively sophisticated section of the community.

<sup>2</sup> More concretely, the sociologist should have had at least a few years' experience of earning a living in a non-academic sphere. Ideally, such experience should provide

of all sections of one's own society. Whether or not the anthropologist sent to investigate a culture alien to his own can dispense with the latter is perhaps arguable; for the sociologist it is a *sine qua non*.

Finally, in the urban environment of modern society, the investigator should remember that he is dealing with concepts and problems whose shape and meaning are constantly changing, and consequently are in continuous need of re-definition and of an approach and a methodology as "dynamic" in quality as the subject of his study.

the kind of training most useful to him in his subsequent sociological field-work. The role of a newspaper reporter (advocated by the late Professor R. E. Park and actually adopted by some of his students) immediately suggests itself, and that of a salesman of the door-to-door category seems to offer equal if not better opportunities of practice in the "art" of approaching and rapidly "sizing up" individuals and social situations.



# PART I

## THE COLOURED FOLK OF CARDIFF

### CHAPTER 2

#### FIELD WORK METHODS

##### 1. THE RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM

The Community Survey with which this book is concerned covers the coloured population of a large Welsh seaport city, mainly made up of the families of African, West Indian, and Arab seamen. In respect to the small size of the community covered (some 7,000 persons at the outside) the survey differs markedly from most of the studies reviewed in the introductory chapter, but the essential qualifications of a community as sociologically defined are satisfactorily fulfilled. The people concerned inhabit an area within the city limits of about one square mile in extent, and by their occupational background as well as by their racial, psychological, and geographical separation from the rest of the city may be regarded as sharing a common body of experience.

The purely methodological problem which arises out of this situation is at once simple and complex. It is simple in that the demarcation of the coloured people from the rest of the city's inhabitants is obvious from nearly every angle. It is complex in that this community in its urban-dwelling and seafaring aspects shares to no small extent the occupational experiences, attitudes, outlook, and even the sentiments of the larger labouring class of which it is a part, and from which at the same time it is distinguished by race, and a fairly wide variety of language, religion and social custom. In other words, are we to look upon the problem as one of behaviour in an urban environment and no more; or as a study in race relations; or, indeed, as both?

After some empirical enquiry and consideration it was found that the most satisfactory way of meeting these rather comprehensive demands was to approach them from three angles; in terms of (a) the historical antecedents and occupational

background of the community, (b) its social structure and general sociology, and (c) its relationship to and its position as part of the surrounding matrix of the larger British society. So far as (a) is concerned, the material was obtained mainly in documentary form. Reports of industrial surveys, contemporary literature, Cardiff City Council reports, newspaper files, records and reports on the shipping industry, and the publications and files of the League of Coloured Peoples provided a substantial basis for the writer's own empirical knowledge of factors and conditions. The compilation of material on (b) called for the assembly of relevant social and economic data relating to the community and its environment. These data were obtained "in the field" almost entirely by means of anthropological methods of enquiry (see below). In (c), a much wider question is involved, and one which calls for a combination of all the above methods. It is a matter of deciding how far the sociology of the community has been and is affected by the cultural influences of British society, especially those of Cardiff itself. Such a consideration involved examining the British cultural heritage, more particularly in respect of popular attitudes and sentiments on the subject of coloured people and colour prejudice. It was soon found that the latter aspect, in particular—colour prejudice and its concomitants—played so large a part in shaping the general sociological situation, that it demanded more than a superficial explanation. This, in turn, called for further field work, in addition to the use of documentary material and contemporary literature, and included the use of questionnaires, the personal experiences and observations of the writer in lecturing and talking to some two dozen male and female Service units, further enquiries by W.E.A. students, acting on the writer's instructions and suggestions, and his own periodic contacts with coloured communities in other parts of the country, in Liverpool, London, and Hull, and with the voluntary organizations serving them.

## 2. TECHNIQUE OF ENQUIRY

It may be of interest briefly to compare the general technique of enquiry used in this investigation with the methods discussed

in the previous chapter. One of the more important, if less obvious, disadvantages which the anthropologist working in Western society has to surmount is the fact that his subjects are out of sight for a large part of the day behind the walls of houses, offices, etc. In most pre-literate societies, everyday life is lived very much more in public. In the case of Loudoun Square, however, there was some compensation for this in view of the habit of the menfolk, in particular, of using the streets as a social centre. On the other hand, as succeeding chapters should show, there were reasons additional to the conventional ones which made the task of sociological enquiry into the coloured quarter of Cardiff a difficult one, an undertaking not to be attempted successfully in any official capacity. The main reason for this is the community's bitter memory of its clashes with the townspeople, and of individual struggles to make a living in the face of white competition and opposition.<sup>1</sup> The community has been subjected to one or two previous "surveys", and not a little journalistic inquiry and comment, some of it undoubtedly malicious.<sup>2</sup> References to the latter will be found in this study. On the whole, therefore, bearing in mind the history and recent experiences of the community, it is in no way surprising that inquisitive strangers should be regarded with suspicion. Unless he is already accredited in some way, a white man in the district may be looked upon with as much dislike as, and sometimes considerably more suspicion than, a coloured man is by members of the white public in an up-town area of the city. This matter obviously needs further clarification and some qualification, but

<sup>1</sup> cf. *Western Mail*, Cardiff, April, 1936. "The coloured folk of Cardiff are patient and cheerful." "By Our Own Reporter," and the *Daily Express*, July, 1936. "No Mean Cities of Britain, No. 11, Cardiff" with the sub-title: "Half-Caste Girl: she presents a city with one of its big problems."

Significantly enough, a good deal of this literature is by no means unsympathetic, even though it is sometimes lacking in perspicuity. Note the following:

"The coloured man is a good father to his half-caste children—all of them, ironically enough, are British-born subjects—and is proud of them. . . ."

"The half-caste boys have a poor chance of employment, their sisters have practically none. White girls will not work alongside coloured girls, and the half-caste girls themselves are not eager for work."

"The negro, darkly statuesque, implores the sky over dockland, 'Lord, why is my name Ishmael? Why is every man's hand against me?'"

<sup>2</sup> Personal resistance to the approaches of white people showed itself in several ways, for example, as unwillingness to co-operate with them. One coloured "die-hard" mentioned to the writer that his own strong objection to mixed marriages (as one form of co-operation) was that marrying a white woman had a somewhat "bad effect" on a coloured man. "It made him more 'white' in his attitude."

it is a prefatory methodological point of some importance,<sup>1</sup> and one with which the writer himself was faced. It so happened that during the period of the enquiry he was invited by the Sons of Africa, the largest Negro association in the district, to address a general meeting of the community on the subject of an educational scheme for the benefit of the children. In the course of his talk, he suggested that possible sources of employment lay abroad in the Colonies, having in mind more particularly the existence of strong prejudice against coloured juveniles in Cardiff. His whole speech, as well as the suggestion itself, was at once interpreted, by almost every coloured man in the room who spoke in comment on it, as a proposal with sinister and ulterior implications, to secure the removal of the coloured people back to the Colonies. This reception<sup>2</sup> illustrated very clearly not only the existence of a considerable depth of resentment, but also the necessity for the investigator to get to know as much as possible of the historical antecedents of the sociological scheme before setting out to analyse it in its contemporary form.

In the present case, for example, he would be wise to have information ready to hand on various incidents and events of

<sup>1</sup> A contemporary novelist makes the same point in the following words:

"I said that I set out to explore Bute Town. I mean, of course, that I set out to explore the surface of it. The white man desirous of penetrating to the real Bute Town has a harder task before him than ever faced Livingstone. Unlike the East End of London, an adventurous tourist cannot view in Cardiff—with occasional dull exceptions—the fan-tan dens, the haunts of the opium-smokers, and the houses where the presence of white women would rouse all the sense of outrage within him. But the coloured man, even though he may not have set foot in Cardiff before, is at once on as familiar terms with Bute Town as he is with Shanghai, Port Said, or Kingston, Jamaica.

"The mate was giving an example of this free masonic wonder at lunch-time. Ten black firemen had been signed on for a past voyage of his. The ship was to sail in the morning. At the last moment, it was decided that she should leave twelve hours earlier and the mate was ordered to scour Bute Town in an attempt to round up the ten. Despite his explanation, he was met at every place he visited with the same reception: none of the names he mentioned was known. At last he chanced upon one of the crew in the street, and informed him of the circumstances. He was taken back to the very spots from which he had been turned away, and in less than an hour the whole ten had been collected." (T. G. B. Clarke, *Go South—Go West*, John Long, London, 1932.

<sup>2</sup> So hostile was the reception that a member of the Society sponsoring the meeting afterwards admitted to the writer that the main reason why he and other officials on the platform said so little in support of the suggestion was because they feared their Society would incur a like odium and misunderstanding. He confessed himself somewhat surprised and very disappointed at the result, but it was better in the circumstances, as he frankly pointed out, "that you should appear as the scape-goat". This remark, however, as well as the event itself, has to be understood in terms of other political happenings in the community, to which reference is made in the section on *Sociology* under the sub-heading of *Social and Political Control* (p. 134).

the 1919 racial riots; to appreciate thoroughly all the ramifications of the Aliens' Order and Shipping Subsidy controversy (See below, pp. 63ff.); and, perhaps above all, to remove any suspicion that unwelcome publicity will follow closely on his visit. The community as a whole is under no misapprehension as to what a large portion of the town thinks of it, and is correspondingly resentful of any unwarranted attempt to pry into its affairs.

### 3. THE MAKING OF CONTACTS

From the purely technical point of view, therefore, the initial problem was that of making contacts, and contacts of the most profitable kind, since it was obvious even at the outset that any formal declaration of a sociological purpose would be met with considerable suspicion, and even active antagonism. Partly on this account, and partly for more conventional anthropological reasons, it was decided that little would be gained in the early stages of the inquiry by using the more or less direct methods of procedure, which, in this country, appear to have been the almost inevitable practice. Fortunately, a useful medium of contact was already available in the form of an anthropometric study of the "mixed" children, which the writer had official permission to carry out at the largest school in the district. This procedure in itself was by no means ideal as an *entrée*,<sup>1</sup> but it did at least afford an opportunity of gaining further introductions besides—what in the circumstances was extremely important—providing some explanation for the presence of a patently alien figure.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mainly because of popular hearsay regarding the results of racial mixture. It was thought (and publicly suggested) by some of the coloured men that the anthropometry was an insidious, though not clearly understood, attempt to discredit them through their children. Much the same view seemed to be held by numbers of the older "mixed" boys and girls at the same time as they gave quite friendly co-operation. One of the older men summed up the fairly general reaction of those who took any interest in the matter by asking "What is it that makes us any different from anyone else?"

<sup>2</sup> If enough time is available, the writer is strongly of opinion that investigators of this type of situation should seek to "participate" thoroughly in the community concerned. It should not be necessary in the present instance, for example, for the investigator to take on the full role of a seaman, but he should certainly fulfil some position which is meaningful in the eyes of a seafaring community. He would learn a great deal in the capacity of a trades union or welfare official, but perhaps most of all as a helper in a boarding house. A coloured man, if educated, would not necessarily be less suspect than a white individual of similar class, though he would undoubtedly find superficial access to the community much easier than would the latter.

By these means, and by further introductions from one of the inhabitants of the district, the preliminary stages of contact, inquiry, and observation were undertaken as unostentatiously as possible. The investigators, namely the writer and his wife, were aided in their initial exploration by some slight knowledge of two African languages (though, unfortunately, not of Arabic), and West African customs and politics, and thus were able fairly soon to establish a reasonable basis of understanding and confidence. Visits were paid consistently, as far as was practicable, to all social and public functions in the district, e.g., weddings, meetings of men's and boys' clubs, churches, public houses, the local air raid warden's post, cafés, shops, etc.; and conversations were sought with as wide an assortment of persons as possible. Those interviewed included not only the coloured members of the community, their wives and children, but also quasi-members, such as school teachers, clergy, and persons belonging to other social classes and living in other parts of the city. At the same time, an attempt was made to obtain some quantitative estimation of such factors as rent, domestic budgeting, size and type of house, and other general amenities. The technique ranged from direct questioning to the giving of a short talk on Danish household management by the writer's wife under the auspices of one of the women's clubs, and further talks by the writer to various assemblies of the men on scientific and other topics.<sup>1</sup> By these means, it was possible to gain a fairly concrete conception of the very varied sociology of the community, and of the main trend of its attitudes and interests. Data were checked, as far as possible, by further direct and indirect questioning. As will be clear, the process as a whole was one which required very careful handling, as much after recognition had been won as at the beginning. This was owing rather to factionalism than any other reason. Personal and group prejudices were almost as marked among some of the white residents in the district as among the more obviously divergent coloured sections. The small size of the community and its even more restricted geographical dimensions made movement from group to group or from house to house awkward at times and on occasions clandestine, and required a considerable amount of forethought

<sup>1</sup> A relatively large proportion of questions coming to the writer as a result of his own talks on anthropological topics related directly to the question of racial superiority and inferiority.

in terms of appointments and public appearances. To achieve a satisfactory condition of *rapport* with all concerned, whilst avoiding at the same time the outward signs of affiliation with any, is not a simple task, particularly when it is evident that true and objective neutrality may win from everyone a modicum of respect, but from none actual confidence.

#### 4. THE NATURE OF THE INTERVIEW

In general, therefore, the technique adopted was deliberately indirect in character, both in the making of contacts and in eliciting the information required. For example, in the course of an interview, particularly in the early stages of the inquiry, it was always sought to lead the conversation towards the subject in view rather than to introduce it directly. This procedure was not always easy or practicable, partly owing to some lack of English on the part of some of the persons interviewed, partly owing to the investigator's ignorance of their languages, and it led not infrequently to redundancy and repetitive analogy, although even this occasionally served a purpose in denoting some point of particular interest to the speaker and his group. Interest was sometimes stimulated by reference to some well-known topic, such as the Colour Bar itself, or to some controversial personality in the district, whilst reference to one's own social background and interests served a certain though limited purpose.

In general, the investigators found a strong vein of friendliness amongst the individuals concerned, whether African, West Indian, White, Arab or "mixed blood". This was all the more apparent when the persons in question felt assured of a sympathetic interest in their affairs, and it is a point which is strongly endorsed by other people who have had any length of sympathetic contact with the district. As will become more obvious from the subsequent sociological analysis, one of the main complaints of the coloured Loudoun Square inhabitant is that he is looked upon as something of an oddity by the world outside.<sup>1</sup> This is perhaps already sufficiently evident amongst the

<sup>1</sup> To quote one of the West Indians: "Soho is the sort of place where anything might happen and no one takes any particular notice of it; but if it happens *here* there's a *hell-of-a-baloo*."

educated class of coloured people in this country, but it is interesting, though not altogether surprising, to find that the far less well-equipped type of coloured man is hardly less resentful of, and is certainly as much alive to, all the implications of colour prejudice and its concomitants. So far as the present inquiry is concerned, this point quite obviously constituted the greatest barrier to progress. Once it had been successfully broken down, however, confidence flowed more normally, and by the end of the study it was possible to reveal something of the real purpose of the investigator's presence, and to ask for material assistance.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from investigation within the community, a certain amount of field work was carried out in the city itself. Reference to calls at hotels and boarding houses is made elsewhere. In addition, in the course of assembling various statistical and other relevant data from the appropriate quarters, such as Public Assistance, Unemployment Assistance Board, Sanitation, Public Health, Housing, Police, Probation, and Education officials, and the local branches of the Seamen's Union and Ministry of Labour, an effort was made to estimate the nature of the city's official attitude towards the coloured folk. Such occasions require a more refined technique. The role of the caller as an investigator of social conditions is known, and there is a corresponding tendency to "resistance" on the part of the person interviewed. Often, he inclines either to give an answer which is "required", or to act defensively in his own interest or that of his department.<sup>2</sup> It is a situation which requires careful psychological treatment and on which it is difficult to lay down any law. In his own case, the writer found that the technique of stimulated astonishment and alternate agreement and disagreement paid the best dividends;<sup>3</sup> in one or two cases conclusions came to light which

<sup>1</sup> It is perhaps unnecessary to add that the problem had to be stated from a utilitarian angle. The average coloured person is as incapable as the average white man of seeing why anyone should be interested in studying a problem, least of all a human and social one, for its own sake alone.

<sup>2</sup> That this was sometimes actually the case was admitted by one official in the course of a discussion on the local colour bar. Speaking *unofficially*, he said that there was a certain amount of prejudice against coloured men using certain premises, but that, he was careful to add, would not be his *official* reply.

<sup>3</sup> cf. Julian Blackburn, *Sociological Review*, Oct. 1941, "The Psychology of the Interview," which offers a comprehensive comment on this question. Note the following:—

"Among the conversational techniques recommended by Oldfield we find the following: (1) Agreement with the candidate's views. This serves to lessen the inevitable initial barriers. (2) Disagreement may also be subtly used. If it is only partial







were almost diametrically opposed to the original sentiments and views of the person interviewed. These examples and experiences tend to endorse the opinion expressed at the end of the last chapter—that the making of sociological enquiries, whether the technique be termed anthropological or not, is a matter requiring trained and technical preparation on the part of its exponents.

In the broader field, outside the actual Cardiff survey, the writer adopted as far as possible the same indirect method of enquiry. In several cases, however, it was possible to reveal the full purpose of his investigations without prejudice to the work, and a number of useful autobiographies and other documentary material were obtained as a result. In seeking autobiographical matter, particularly from coloured subjects, the writer asked simply for an essay or account of the individual's experiences and impressions of England and of English people. In his approach to Service units, to whom he had the opportunity of speaking under the auspices of the Cambridge Committee for Adult Education in H.M. Forces, he delivered as far as possible the same talk, or a modification of it, dealing with the social implications of Anglo-Colonial relations. Questions were then invited and a discussion followed, with results whose methodological value varied considerably; it was obvious, in some instances, that the general "atmosphere" was conditioned substantially either by the known views of certain officers or by a prevailing "Left Wing" group of sentiments.

### CHAPTER 3

#### MARITIME SETTING OF THE COMMUNITY

The community of coloured folk with which we are concerned lives in the dock area of Cardiff, in the district known as Bute Town. The greater part of them are to be found in the southern

the candidate's independence may be tested without his being exposed to the full strain of total opposition. (3) Surprise and astonishment may be used to improve *rappport*, as may also the treatment of the candidate's arguments with due seriousness." Quoting Oldfield again, Blackburn concludes: "During the interview, the interviewer ought to think and act in terms of attitudes. Never mind *what* the candidate says; notice the *way* he says it. Don't try to make the correct remark; think instead of the *appropriate attitude* to take up, and a suitable form of words will be forthcoming."

half of the Adamsdown Ward of the city, but a further representative section lives in the adjacent South Ward. There are a few more coloured families in the centre of the city area, and a few live in other working-class districts, such as Splott, or in suburbs, such as Cathays and Roath. Taking the city as a whole, however, it would probably be true to say that some 95 per cent. live in the special area indicated on the attached map (facing p. 32).

## 1. MERCANTILE SIGNIFICANCE OF CARDIFF

Cardiff in 1938 had a population of some 228,000. The growth of the city,<sup>1</sup> and the prosperity which came to it during the latter part of the last century, was largely due to its position as a very important coaling and coal-exporting port, and to its mercantile trade as a whole. Cardiff's industries profited from a far-sighted and adequate programme of rail and dock amenities, including the Taff Vale Railway, constructed as early as 1841, the South Wales Railway (subsequently merged into the G.W.R. system), the West and East Bute Docks, and the Rhymney Railway, completed about 1860, to link up with another rich section of the South Wales coalfield. The Roath Basin and Roath Dock followed in 1887, and shortly afterwards large timber yards were constructed in connection with the canal dock of the Glamorganshire Canal, recently acquired by the Bute trustees. By this time the total deadweight inwards and outwards had risen to eight and a quarter million tons to be dealt with at the Bute Docks alone.<sup>2</sup>

The establishment of a dry dock system and ship-repairing yards, a patent fuel industry, and the construction of the Dowlais (Cardiff) blast furnaces with an import of some 700,000 tons of iron ore in a single year, contributed further to Cardiff's position of mercantile eminence before the First World War. The registered net tonnage of vessels cleared from the port with cargoes and in ballast rose from just over 1 million tons in 1857 to 12.6 million in pre-1914 days, and departures with cargoes for foreign destinations reached a larger tonnage than those at

<sup>1</sup> A very striking one when it is recalled that in 1801 the population was only about 1,000, and in 1838, only some 10,000.

<sup>2</sup> cf. *Wales and Monmouthshire*, "The Story of Cardiff". The latest addition to the Cardiff Docks was opened in 1907 and named the Queen Alexandra Dock.

either Liverpool or London, the only ports providing a larger market for the employment of coasting and foreign-going ships. Despite the severe shipping depression in the period between the two wars, the port has continued its imports of iron ore, fruit, vegetables, pitwood and grain provisions and its exports of coal, coke, patent fuel and flour, though on a diminished scale.

## 2. CARDIFF AND THE TRAMP TRADE

Situated on the Bristol Channel, the city has the benefit of the prevailing south-west winds of the region, and of a mild climate all the year round. This may be one reason why so many of the coloured seamen have chosen it as a home port to which they persist in returning, at whatever other port of the United Kingdom they are discharged. It is more probable, however, that the conditions of the shipping industry itself are the deciding factor. The fact that Cardiff is one of the main centres of the tramp trade means that a seaman, whether white or coloured, by residing there, is in closest touch with this form of employment.<sup>1</sup>

## 3. THE SHIPPING INDUSTRY AND THE UNIONS

Perhaps it is from this occupational point of view that we should approach the history of the coloured community itself, for to a large extent their experiences and fortunes as a group are not very dissimilar to those of the wider seafaring class to which the greater proportion of them belong. So far as Cardiff is concerned the first decade of the present century will provide a convenient starting-point.

In 1911 the great national strike of seamen took place, inspired and organised by Havelock Wilson and other originators of the movement for a national union. The strike, an event of very great industrial importance, arose out of the seamen's growing consciousness of their right to industrial recognition, their burning grievances of low wages and deplorable conditions of labour and livelihood. The employment of foreign seamen

<sup>1</sup> The pros and cons of tramp employment are worth a brief comment. The tramp secures a longer voyage than a liner, but has the disadvantage (if it be so considered) of offering no permanence of job. Liner routes, on the other hand, are necessarily less casual in their demands.

in British ships provided Wilson and his colleagues with another important target of attack in their early struggles. They argued that British owners were deliberately discharging British hands abroad on trumped-up charges and replacing them with lower-paid foreign labour, and that British seamen were obliged to sign on again at home at lower rates to get any livelihood at all.<sup>1</sup>

The implications of this complaint were equally cogent. An industry manned by a heterogeneous collection of nationalities was incapable of cohesion and therefore of organisation,<sup>2</sup> which, so far as all seamen serving in British ships were concerned, was Wilson's objective. In any case he succeeded. Between 1890 and 1903, the foreign seamen in British ships had been increasing from 27,000 to 40,000, while the number of British seamen had actually decreased by 10,000. By 1912, however, there had been an increase of some 30,000 British seamen and a reduction of foreigners by 9,000.<sup>3</sup> During the subsequent war the unions managed to ensure that an alien employed on a British ship must be paid at British rates, and this ruling was continued under the auspices of the National Maritime Board, but it applied only to crews signed on at home ports or on European articles.<sup>4</sup> In effect, in the shape of Asiatic and "Lascar"

<sup>1</sup> cf. *Seamen's Torch: Life Story of Captain Tupper*, 1911, pp. 20-22. "In those days hundreds of ships signed on or off in Antwerp, Rotterdam, or any other port, where pay was low. Germans, Scandinavians, Poles, Finns, signed articles under the Red Ensign, and stayed in the British merchant service. The British had to accept their low standards to get a livelihood at all. And in those days the owner would pay off his crew where he liked and leave them to find their way home as best they could; they signed on again, of course they had to."

The substance of this complaint has provided the main industrial contention in disputes between owners and unions right up to the present day (see later section of this chapter and chapter 4).

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.* "I want to explain that there were other obstacles to forming one solid body of these men, with a representative body which could fairly and decently put their grievances to their employers' representatives. The men of the Tyne, say, had in many respects a different sense of values from the men of the Mersey, or Southampton Water. Even now a ship owner would avoid putting a mixed crew of Liverpool and Southampton on a big ship; a friction would set up. Just as a ship would not man with both Madras and Calcutta Lascars," p. 40.

<sup>3</sup> cf. R. H. Thornton, *British Shipping*, pp. 219-222. The number of casual foreigners employed on British ships fell from 40,000 in 1902 to 8,000 in 1935.

<sup>4</sup> There were one or two exceptions to this rule. For example, coloured seamen sailing on the West African liner trade exLiverpool could be engaged at lower rates than white seamen. The N.M.B. is a non-statutory body consisting of representatives of the Mercantile Marine, deck officers, firemen, etc., to discuss and settle by agreement rates of wages and conditions of employment in British ships which sign on their crews in the United Kingdom. It is, therefore, the Trades Council of the industry, since its function is to negotiate with the employers. It does not deal with ships which sign on their crews at a non-British port.

articles the gap was left wide open for manipulation of the wage situation in other ways. The point has an important bearing on the subsequent history of the Cardiff coloured population, and meant simply that the emphasis on the seamen's struggle was shifted to a narrower sphere.

#### 4. THE "SYSTEM" AND ITS VICTIMS

The lot of the British merchant seaman is traditionally a hard one. He is drawn, as a rule, from the least literate section of society, and in consequence, perhaps, tends to fall foul most easily of the peculiar social and economic circumstances in which he lives and works. These circumstances, particularly unenviable at the beginning of the century, have been characterised as a "system of slavery" by at least one of its victims,<sup>1</sup> who claims that deplorable rates of pay were its basis and that it was well marked in Cardiff itself. According to the autobiographical account of this author, the "System" constituted a vicious circle and repeated tale of low wages, debt, occasional drunkenness, fraud, graft and unemployment<sup>2</sup>—a picture of maritime social conditions which seems to have held good in several respects for the white as well as coloured seaman even up to the present day, and whose perpetuation, despite sporadic attempts at legislation, resulted from the lack of public interest in the industry as well as from its depressed condition throughout virtually the entire period between the wars. It is the misfortune of the merchant seaman that of all the labouring class he is the first to feel the reactions of a world economic slump; and yet it is he who by his labour supports and sustains a whole host of subsidiary economic interests and services. These comprise not only ship-owners and shareholders, but directly or indirectly a legion of ancillaries, such as ships' runners, chandlers, publicans, ship-brokers, boarding-house and lodging-house keepers, touts of all kinds, prostitutes, etc., to say nothing of an army of officials,

<sup>1</sup> *Seamen's Torch: Captain Tupper*, "It was the System. It allowed rates of pay to remain so low, so damnably and inhumanly low, that the children of seamen went day after day to hunt for the treasure of discarded scraps of dirty food."

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.* For a graphic description of the operation of the "System" and the vicious circle see the reference above.

from the Shipowners' Federation to the Trade Union secretary and Port Welfare officer.

### 5. THE BOARDING-HOUSE MASTER

The boarding- and lodging-house master has come in for a great deal of adverse criticism. There is no doubt that he often makes a good living out of the seamen, but the function he fulfils, so far as the alien and even more the coloured alien seafarer is concerned, is in present circumstances well-nigh essential. Picture the situation of a coloured seaman or group of coloured seamen arriving at Cardiff for the first time, either on discharge or seeking fresh employment. As seamen they can stay only at the Sailors' Home or at a boarding house. Being coloured, it is unlikely that they will be welcome at the former, and in any case they will probably prefer to stay at a place kept by one of their own nationality. They are in a strange land, of whose language they may be almost ignorant. Nevertheless, there are various matters requiring urgent attention. There is the necessity of registering with the Police; they must find another ship; they have kit or stores or clothes to buy. They need, in fact, not only some kind of liaison with the outside world, but a veritable father confessor—someone to advise them in case of difficulty, to write their letters for them, to stand surety for them if they should fall foul of the law; to provide them with credit if their resources run out before they secure further employment; and finally, if they do not return from their next trip, to dispose of their kit and return their effects to their relatives. With this heavy and very comprehensive degree of responsibility, it is not surprising that individual boarding-house keepers are sometimes accused of indulging in unfair and even corrupt practices. Particularly in the old days, before the regulations introduced the practice of signing on a ship before the eyes of a government official, crews were found and engaged through the direct offices of a boarding-house master, who was thereby provided with an excellent opportunity of keeping his customers in continuous economic thrall. There were further opportunities for nefarious practices. One of the most notorious of these arose from the custom of "buying" jobs. Individual boarding-house



keepers kept closely in touch with the second engineers of steamers, who were on the look-out for many men as firemen and stokers. A job could be secured by means of a "backhander" of two pounds to the "Second", supplied by the man requiring it.<sup>1</sup> Another practice of boarding-house masters was to send an indigent customer out hawking goods on the basis of a small commission. On the other hand, it must be remembered that the business of running a boarding house is as precarious as the industry on which it depends. During a bad period of unemployment it is not unlikely that a master will be left with a dozen men on his hands who have literally come to the end of their resources and who look to him for their keep. In such a case, the master has no option but to apply to the authorities for aid.<sup>2</sup> If he turns the men out he runs the risk of earning a bad name. There is nowhere else they can go except the workhouse, and in that case he will forfeit the chance of ever regaining his outlay. His hope lies in a revival of trade, and of his debtors recouping him. In the majority of cases they do so as far as they can; but even this does not exhaust the onerous side of the business. Apart from the financial implications, present-day regulations demand as the price of his licence as the keeper of an authorised Seamen's Lodging House that his premises fulfil numerous precise stipulations relating to health, sanitation, right of entry, etc.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Another "back-handing" practice of far less antiquity sometimes took place in connection with the boarding of alien seamen in boarding houses whilst serving on articles. In this case, the crew-master would receive a "commission" from the boarding-house master on each batch of men boarded with him out of the 5/- per head allowed by the shipowner for their billeting (*communicated*).

<sup>2</sup> There is one record during the 1935 trouble (see below, p. 73) of a Malay boarding-house master being owed as much as £2,000.

<sup>3</sup> The most important of these regulations are as follows:

1. He shall not sell or be engaged in the sale of intoxicating liquor, or be engaged or interested in the business of a Clothier, Outfitter, or Slop-dealer.
2. The Medical Officer of Health, officers of the Board of Trade, and Police have right of access and inspection to his premises at any time.
3. He must provide at least 30 cubic feet of air space for each person in his dormitories, and not accommodate at any time a larger number of lodgers than has been authorised by the Council.
4. He must follow out certain provisions regarding sanitation, water closets and washing facilities and general hygiene. He must affix in a prominent place a copy of the City's Bye-laws in this respect together with his scale of charges, and not make a higher charge than is provided by the scale.
5. He must not admit or fail to exclude from his premises any thief, reputed thief, prostitute or reputed prostitute, or any other person of immoral or improper character.

The object of the first-mentioned provision is mainly to prevent the practice of Truck. In the old days it was frequently the practice of a ship's master or boarding-house keeper to fit out the crew after signing on with various articles of second-hand

The following is a complete enumeration of seamen's lodging houses and boarding houses in Cardiff in terms of the nationalities for which they cater: it will be noted that the Arab houses easily outnumber those catering for other non-Europeans.<sup>1</sup>

<i>Nationality</i>	<i>No. of Houses</i>	<i>Beds</i>
West African and West Indian . . . . .	4 .	23
Somali . . . . .	4 .	28
Arab . . . . .	17 .	186
Indian . . . . .	1 .	8
Maltese . . . . .	5 .	113
Greek . . . . .	4 .	16
Cypriot . . . . .	1 .	1
Portuguese . . . . .	3 .	40
Spanish . . . . .	1 .	3
Turkish . . . . .	1 .	10
Malay . . . . .	1 .	7
Scandinavian . . . . .	1 .	8
British . . . . .	8 .	421 <sup>2</sup>

## 6. SEAMEN AS "LODGERS"

In Cardiff, as in other ports, it is an offence against the law for any private person or householder to lodge a seaman. The purpose of this is to restrict their lodging to reputable establishments, but the regulation is not generally obeyed, and there are ways and means of evading it with impunity. All that an unauthorised person has to do is to let a room unfurnished, and the "lodger" immediately becomes his sub-tenant and not his lodger. Hence arises a fairly common practice by which the would-be occupant of a room simply purchases the few articles of furniture in it to satisfy the Police or Sanitary Authorities that he did in fact take the room unfurnished. Often this "purchase" of furniture is a mere pretence, and a fictitious receipt for a sum of money

clothing, of which the indigent seamen were usually badly in need after their long period of unemployment. The exchange was effected against the customary advance note, and the master's "clothing department" ashore was known as the Slop-chest.

<sup>1</sup> The Arab establishments, incidentally, have a very high reputation for general cleanliness.

<sup>2</sup> Cardiff is probably less badly off for accommodation than some other ports. In Liverpool up to the present day there was a fairly common saying that the only bed a seaman coming ashore at night could hope to find would be with a prostitute.

paid for the furniture is all that is required to place the authorities in a hopeless position.<sup>1</sup>

This situation, however, is simply an aspect of the general picture of "Sailor Town" and of an environment which should be appreciated in its much wider implications. In addition to British seamen calling at Cardiff there are, it is calculated, some 40,000 foreign seamen visitors every year (the figure excludes returns from Belgium, Sweden and Denmark). All merchant ships allow their crews ashore until time for work in the morning. A general estimate is that some 15 per cent. of the crews go ashore on weekday evenings, and rather more than half on Saturdays and Sundays, and a proportion of these are of course still ashore at midnight.<sup>2</sup> Whether European or coloured, such men are as strangers less likely to be able to find their way about, and, wittingly or not, tend inevitably to fall in with people whose interest in them is definitely economic and very often nefarious.<sup>3</sup>

## 7. THE CARDIFF DOCKLAND

In Cardiff, as in other British ports, the general physical as well as social conditions all contribute to this effect. A glance at the map will show that the docks, the Pier Head and the landing stages stand at the end of a narrow peninsula of land over a mile distant from the city proper, to which they are connected by one main thoroughfare and a tramway. The whole of this peninsula is a maritime quarter in every sense of the word. Its houses are inhabited almost exclusively by seafaring people, its offices and buildings and many of its shops have a similar connection, and its remaining space is taken up almost entirely with graving and floating docks, warehouses, railways and canals, timber yards

<sup>1</sup> cf. Capt. F. A. Richardson. "Social Conditions in Ports," Conference on the Welfare of the Mercantile Marine Soc. Hyg. Coun. July 1936. Legislation to this effect was enacted as long ago as 1894 under the Merchant Shipping Act which gave this power under local bye-laws.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> cf. *Captain Tupper, op. cit.*

"But it was 'Hello Jack!', a hearty hand on a shoulder, and very soon, across the road to a bar. At the best, the free and easy sailor man stood so many drinks, and took so many himself, that in the end his money had shrunk to practically nothing. . . . At the worst, some sociable stranger took his eye away from his glass for just a fraction of time—and something went into the glass which knocked Jack cold. He would pick himself up, sometime, from some back alley, with a thick head and no money at all. Skinned clean. . . ."

and ponds and the other appurtenances of mercantile and commercial enterprise. It is a drab district, differing from other great ports of the kingdom only by its isolation from the rest of the town on the one hand, and by the relative width of its streets on the other. Except in one business square, the buildings and architecture make no attempt to be impressive; they are generally of old type and out-of-date design, with a uniform nondescriptness of colour.<sup>1</sup> During the daytime and in the business quarter by the Pier Head, there are obvious signs of commercial and industrial activity. There is a coming and going of clerks, business men, ships' officers, and naval seamen, and (during the war) of soldiers on barrack duty. Here, too, during the daytime files the procession of merchant seamen on their way to the Labour Exchange to sign on at the "pool", and crowds of dock workers, ship repairers, scalers and general labourers pass in and out of the yards. But practically all this is over by six o'clock in the evening. For an hour past the district has been emptying of the office class and of most of the dock workers whom tram, bus, cycle and motor car carry off to the town, and the area is now as complete a "Sailor town" as one could hope to find.

As in other similar districts, its amenities for recreation and leisure-time diversion are of a strictly stereotyped kind. In striking contrast to the complete absence of outdoor facilities such as football and cricket pitches, bowling greens or swimming baths, the indoor diversions of drink and women are in plentiful supply.<sup>2</sup> In most of the smaller streets there is at least one public house, and in Bute Street, which marks Bute Town's "bright light", or more properly "red light" quarter, public houses and cafés (which are quasi-public houses, besides providing other less socially approved entertainment) jostle each other, in one case to the extent of more than two dozen in a distance of some 300 yards. For the newly arrived seaman who is seeking companionship, recreation, or even a meal, the opportunities are not very wide. At the most there is a public library, two or three institutes and missions where he can play billiards, read, or write letters;

<sup>1</sup> In comment on port conditions in general Captain Richardson (*op. cit.*) writes: — "Slum and dilapidation are nearly always the characteristics. Poorly lit streets, old-fashioned and noisome street lavatories, over-numerous public-houses, mean type cafés, whose real purpose is never left in doubt, are factors that appear in the detailed description of the dockland areas of which survey has been made."

<sup>2</sup> Curiously enough, not even a cinema is numbered amongst dockland's indoor diversions.

and perhaps two "better class" cafés, which, however, are not easy to find or light on his purse.<sup>1</sup> If he is a coloured man, his immediate position is both better and worse. There is sufficient variety of coloured races and nationalities to ensure that with judicious inquiry he will be able to find some of his "own people" in the district to put him on his way. On the other hand, his restriction to the dock area will be virtually ensured by the non-official, yet socially recognised, barrier that separates him by reason of his colour and occupation from the rest of the town.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As Captain Richardson remarks (*op. cit.*) in general reference—"there is no comparison between the amenities of the normal up-town neighbourhood and those of areas surrounding the docks".

<sup>2</sup> Fairly frequent mention of the "colour line" in Cardiff is made in the course of this survey. Its existence is so manifest and its implications so obvious from every angle that in discussing the position of the coloured community in this respect there is a danger in overlooking altogether the significance of their purely maritime associations. Nor is the danger obviated by assuming that we are concerned merely with a particular phenomenon or aspect of the British social structure: there are other subtleties in the situation which are best reviewed in terms of the social or occupational class to which these coloured folk belong. Merchant seamen probably constitute in themselves a relatively "isolated" section of our society. By virtue of their employment they tend to be separated not only spatially and physically, but in actual psychological terms—through cosmopolitan experience, hardship, and sometimes danger—from the broad labouring section of society to which they belong. Occupational disassociation, moreover, is enhanced by other social factors as well as by historical tradition. Any seaman, by reason of his trade as a manual worker, figures low in the social scale, but, what is even more significant from the point of view of society, he is also very frequently a migrant and even an alien (in the literal sense of this word). His social relationships tend to be vague, transient and difficult to determine; his responsibilities few and sometimes impossible to enforce. The reciprocal obligations which bind other members of the group have less chance of fulfilment in his case, and in failing may set up a dangerous tendency towards social disintegration. Society prefers to accord to such persons a limited status, and sometimes for convenience to restrict them to a more or less separate locality, in the same way that actual aliens, lacking the ordinary privileges of citizenship, are sometimes segregated.

These considerations, it is obvious, are doubly manifest in the case of the Cardiff community. As seafarers, and as racially distinctive strangers, their alien quality and the corresponding isolation has a twofold basis. The fact that other "isolated" types, such as prostitutes, who are likewise out of status with the greater society, should also be found in the same area seems to add further theoretical point to this suggestion. It is interesting to find a somewhat similar suggestion advanced by Louis Wirth in his study of another "segregated" community. (cf. *The Ghetto*, Chic. Univ. Soc. Series, p. 284.)

"The physical distance that separates these immigrant areas from that of the natives is at the same time a measure of the social distance between them and a means by which this social distance can be maintained. This does not so much imply mutual hostility as it implies and makes possible mutual tolerance. These segregated areas make it possible for the immigrants to avoid the ancient dictum, 'When in Rome do as the Romans do', and permits them to be themselves."

## 8. THE MARITIME POPULATION AND ITS LOCATION

We may now pass on to review in more specific terms, firstly the general habitat and component elements of the seafaring population of Cardiff as a whole, and next the specific location of the coloured community itself, which makes up the largest proportion of that population. It may be taken for granted at the start that practically all seafarers, whether temporarily or permanently resident in Cardiff, are to be found in Adamsdown and South Wards, more specifically in South Adamsdown and on the side of South Ward east of the River Taff. In this area live most of the white as well as coloured seamen, although one or two licensed boarding establishments for the former have recently been opened by the Port Welfare authorities in an up-town district. There are no means of estimating with any degree of accuracy the size of the population so designated, but the figures for the whole of the Adamsdown and South Wards for 1940 were placed at some 15,000 and 14,000 respectively, and so probably a figure of some 10,000 would be a reasonable estimate of the resident population of the mercantile quarter itself.<sup>1</sup> A very general estimate for the coloured community would suggest a figure in the neighbourhood of 6,000.<sup>2</sup> In addition to the coloured households—including all families of non-European origin—there are representative numbers of various European nationalities living in the same area. They consist mainly of Greeks, Cypriots, Maltese, and Spaniards, with a rather smaller number of Portuguese and Italian families.

The location of these various racial groups and nationalities can be ascertained from the map of dockland (facing p. 32), from which, also, the geographical extent of the maritime quarter as a whole can be gauged. It will be noted that the entire area is clearly demarcated by a number of "natural" boundaries. These consist at the north end, of the Great Western Railway line; on the west side, of the Glamorganshire Canal; on the east side, of the docks railway line, and of a consistent series of warehouses, docks and factories; and on the south, of the Bristol Channel. In other words, this peninsula of human habitation

<sup>1</sup> This figure was arrived at with the help of officials in the Cardiff Public Health Department.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 5 for further demographic particulars.

is almost literally shut in and cut off from the rest of the world by a compact barrier of docks, water, rails, fencing, and machinery. There are, in fact, only three ways of entering the area by land. One of these is by a main thoroughfare—Bute Street—to which reference has already been made. This provides access by a tramway which, starting from the Hayes in the city, crosses the boundary by passing under the viaduct carrying the G.W. railway line. An alternative method of approach from the city is by a fairly broad road which, running alongside the Glamorganshire Canal, leads directly into the coloured quarter itself. The third approach is from the industrial suburb of Grangetown along Clarence Road, passing first by a bridge over the River Taff and secondly by a swing bridge over the lower end of the Glamorganshire Canal<sup>1</sup> into the business quarter of the area. The limited access serves not only to indicate the physical isolation of the district, but perhaps psychologically also to give the city folk and the inhabitants of the peninsula alike an enhanced sense of their mutual disassociation.

## 9. THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE COLOURED FOLK

But while the area as a whole is thus clearly separated from the city by physical as well as psychological barriers, it is hardly less divided in itself by features of the former class. A glance at the distribution of the population soon makes this clear, and a further examination of the topography of the area confirms it.

<sup>1</sup> This Canal, which forms the western boundary of the district, is a sheet of water some 40 yards wide at its narrowest point and perhaps 80 yards at its widest. It has considerable historical interest, particularly from the part it played in the development of Cardiff as a prominent seaport and commercial city. Indeed, its establishment as early as 1798 provides the landmark separating modern from old Cardiff. Up to the early nineteenth century the important iron-manufacturing industry at the valley heads of South Wales lacked any means of cheap and convenient transport to the coast, and the only means open to the iron-masters of Dowlais and Cyfarthfa of conveying their products was on the backs of horses and mules over the rough tracks which led circuitously over the hill-tops from north to south. The opening of the Canal therefore greatly accelerated both maritime and industrial activity; but after some fifty years of useful service the numerous locks on the canal, necessitated by the rising ground it covered, made it unsuitable to cope with the growing volume of traffic. To-day, although barge traffic is negligible, it floats a certain amount of timber. It is also used by the coloured and other children from the houses along its banks as a surreptitious bathing and "boating" resort: planks are paddled canoe fashion on the stream with the aid of an improvised wooden board, while the grass-grown towing path serves as a somewhat precarious playground.

Firstly, the Adamsdown section of the community is divided from that in South Ward by the Mount Stuart Square business quarter, a railway yard and piece of waste ground; secondly, a cutting from the Glamorganshire Canal, turning eastward and crossed at Bute Street by a bridge, bisects the Adamsdown part itself. There is thus a further sub-division of the maritime community as a whole into three "natural" locations. The corresponding ethnic sections of the community are almost equally distinctive. In the last-mentioned locality, i.e. north of the Canal cutting, are mainly Greeks and Cypriots; immediately below the bridge and extending as far down as West Bute Street, hereafter known as the Loudoun Square locality, lives the coloured community proper; whilst a further mixed population, composed of three main elements, whites including Spaniards and coloured—with the latter comprising perhaps one-third of the whole—inhabits the third locality at the tip of the peninsula.

We can now proceed to consider the coloured community itself. The main elements consist of Arab, West African and West Indian seamen, but it has been estimated that altogether in this Loudoun Square quarter some fifty different nationalities are to be found. The *community area*, as such, consists of Loudoun Square itself and a further fifteen inhabited streets, the location of which can be seen on the map. The Square itself serves as a convenient centre. Here the density of the coloured population is greatest—with perhaps eight coloured out of every ten persons—whereas, in the four small streets immediately south of it, such as Hannah Street, etc., probably not more than every other person is coloured. Further south, at the Pier Head, as already mentioned, the proportion is even smaller. It will thus be evident from the way the population is distributed that the choice of this district as the coloured quarter is in no sense an arbitrary one. In comparison, for example, with similar communities in other seaports of the kingdom, such as Liverpool, London, South Shields, etc., the concentration and segregation of the Cardiff coloured folk is very significant and worthy of emphasis. Indeed, so plentiful are dark skins in comparison with light in Loudoun Square and its satellite streets that a stranger entering the district for the first time might well imagine himself in some oriental town.

In terms of general features and amenities the district thus



demarcated differs from the rest of dockland in only one or two important respects. The four rows of large early Victorian houses forming Loudoun Square enclose a small park, which is used as a children's playground, and includes a paddling pool, swings, etc. There are several churches in active use and one or two are lying derelict. One, at the north end and adjacent to the canal bridge, is Anglo-Catholic, and another of importance on the south side of the Square itself is Methodist.

#### 10. BUTE STREET AND ITS INHABITANTS

For reasons which will presently become clearer, it is a moot point whether Bute Street itself should be included in the coloured area thus specified. Geographically it is immediately adjacent, and a large number of its inhabitants are coloured, but there are sociological reasons for not identifying it too closely with the community life of the coloured section. In any case, Bute Street, with its world-wide reputation, deserves more than passing reference. The wide thoroughfare, traversed by a double tramway track with overhead wires, connects the Pier Head with the up-town area, a distance of over a mile. A large part of the east side of the road contains no shops or buildings, and virtually all pedestrian traffic proceeds along the west or Loudoun Square side past the almost innumerable "cafés" for which Bute Street is famous or infamous, and the only less numerous boarding houses and public houses. There are also shops, mainly clothiers', who sell a great variety of garments, from seafaring equipment, such as firemen's suits, naval uniforms, seaboots, wire belts (used because their elasticity is not affected by sweat), etc., to smart lounge suits and felt hats; a number of general stores, and a few jewellers and tobacconists. There are no multiple stores either here or in Loudoun Square.

The notorious Bute Street café, as well as its proprietor and his "staff", have all a certain uniformity of characteristics. Through windows, sometimes partially boarded up, are displayed fairly ostentatiously one or two articles of food, perhaps a few bottles of mineral waters, and sometimes a price list. The outside appearance of the place is essentially drab and unprepossessing, and is enlivened but little by the exotic name scrawled over the

window. The door at the street admits into a room of varying size and shape, and of various degrees of cleanliness, wherein are a few small tables, chairs, and usually one or two couches or settees of battered leather. A strong smell of cooked or cooking food pervades the air, and a wireless set, usually a radiogram, is in full blast in an adjoining room at all times of the day. Apart from light refreshments, such as tea and lemonade, groceries and food can sometimes be bought, and during the daytime a certain amount of this "legitimate" business is carried on. Sometimes there are large mirrors on the wall in such a position as to reflect the entrance of visitors to the café into an inside room, a usual feature of the establishment; to this room entrance is gained through a doorway, sometimes screened, at the back of the café. Here, "callers" can lounge in a greater degree of seclusion, waited upon and chatted to by one or two of the female attendants. Café proprietors are mostly Maltese, but there are other nationalities in the business, such as Indians, Jews, and Africans. In several cases the premises are actually owned by the person running them, and although there are exceptions, there is no doubt that most of them are what the Police are in the habit of terming "alleged brothels", which come into service after dark.

## II. "CAFÉ" PRACTICES

The procedure appears to be somewhat as follows: by virtue of their possessing a food licence, these cafés are able to keep open for "refreshments" until 11 p.m., i.e. one hour later than the public houses close. This enables alcoholic drinks to be served after hours to those who require them, and full advantage is taken both of the thirst of the customer and of his lack of sobriety. For example, a number of concoctions are sold at enhanced prices. In some cases, it is merely diluted whisky at 7/6 per cup: in other cases, when more of a "kick" is required, a mixture of Australian wine and methylated spirits is supplied. Near beer and hop beer are also available at a cost considerably above their flagon price. The implications as well as the purpose of this type of trade are various. In some cases the methylated mixture is supplied deliberately for the purpose of stupefying a customer. He is then robbed of any valuables he happens to be carrying and

is dragged away and deposited fifty yards or so away from the premises, either in Bute Lane (a narrow alleyway behind the Bute Street houses) or in Bute Street itself. A more usual purpose, of course, is that of solicitation, which in this district is probably very rarely, if ever, carried on out of doors. The café proprietor himself may act as the pander on some occasions. The "café girls" themselves are invariably white. Some of them are old hands at the profession, and may even specialise in coloured men. Others are comparatively new at the art, and more or less in process of being "broken in". Most of these women are fairly young, and some are quite attractive in appearance and smartly dressed. During the day they are to be seen occasionally at a café door, usually wearing an apron, which appears to be a badge of their occupation as "waitresses". Their terms of engagement vary. Usually, however, they appear to work on a commission basis with the café proprietor at whose establishment they live. They sleep upstairs in a room which contains a large double bed<sup>1</sup> and a few articles of furniture, for which they are supplied with a rent book by the proprietor.<sup>2</sup> The methods by which they are recruited also vary considerably. It appears as if the "older hands" quite deliberately follow trade about; that is to say, they may move from Cardiff to Liverpool, or back again to South Shields, according to the prospects of business, and sometimes, no doubt, to the degree of attention they receive from the Police.<sup>3</sup>

The "fresh" ones enter the trade in several ways. Sometimes it is merely a quarrel with parents or the fear of detection in some more or less petty misdemeanour;<sup>4</sup> in some cases, women

<sup>1</sup> It is said that German bombs which fell in the vicinity of Bute Street during the air raids of the Second World War produced some sardonic and gruesome situations in this connection.

<sup>2</sup> One estimate of the economic arrangements in this respect supplied to the writer, was 8/- to 10/- per week rental plus half of the girls' earnings.

<sup>3</sup> Compare this account of the Cardiff café and its implications with a "Report on Investigation into Conditions of the Coloured Population in a Stepney area", wherein the investigator, Mrs. Young, describes a very similar situation, pp. 24-25. She mentions, also, that the Stepney cafés are in many cases linked with cafés elsewhere—not only in other parts of London such as the Tottenham Court Road area, but as far afield as Coventry. It is possible that there are analogous linkages in the case of Cardiff, although the present writer cannot recall having heard of any specific instances.

<sup>4</sup> The following example of one Cardiff girl is probably fairly typical of many others. A young girl of good-class family had her pocket-money stopped by her father, who did not approve of her expenditure on cosmetics. Mainly, no doubt, with the object of "keeping up with her friends", the girl proceeded to steal some

fall into the occupation through a social misfortune, such as an illegitimate baby; sometimes one of the parents marries a second time, and the girl finds her new home life intolerable; to others the restrictions of life within a limited circle of experience are burdensome and they leave it through a spirit of adventure. Perhaps most of these girls, however, drift into the Bute Street milieu directly or indirectly through sheer economic necessity. Particularly during the depression in the South Wales coal trade, young girls were forced into such cities as Cardiff to work in some cases practically for their keep alone. After long hours of tedium and drudgery they readily accepted the invitation of other girls like themselves to find relief in the cosmopolitan excitement of dockland and in a life where, as they speedily discovered, they could earn more money in half an hour than was previously produced by a month's drudgery. Added to this is the opportunity for the first time in their lives to wear expensive, even fashionable clothing.

It is an interesting question how far Bute Street is allowed almost deliberately to continue as the vice area of the town. The Police make sporadic raids on the cafés, and sometimes send plain-clothes detectives into them in the hope of catching some illegality red-handed. This is not easy to do. Apart from the employment of reflecting mirrors by which the approach of a policeman can be observed by the wrong-doers inside the café, there are other means of disposing of the necessary evidence. For example, a slop bucket filled with water is kept handy, and illicitly supplied drink is sometimes served in teacups so that both cups and their contents can be dropped into the bucket, if necessary, at a moment's notice. Again, it is admittedly not easy to put a stop to the practice of prostitution unless it can be proved in terms of a disorderly house.<sup>1</sup> Soliciting is not done in the

money, and was subsequently sent to an approved school from which she ran away. She was then "picked up" by one of the Maltese proprietors while he was in another town. He proceeded to buy clothes for her, and gradually to "break her in" (that is, accustom her to the life, art and technique of prostitution) whilst looking after her. After this she was more or less in the toils for good. She felt she could not return to her parents, and was in constant fear lest the authorities should discover her. Lacking in experience of the world and without any means of coping with the situation in which she found herself, she simply accepted it as the only life open to her.

<sup>1</sup> It is possible at the same time that a certain amount of souteneuring is done by hawkers who go round the ships. Mr. J. Sandeman Allen, M.P. (7th Conf. Soc. Hyg.), suggests that a strict survey of hawkers' licenses would be of great value. Most of the docks at which ships berth in other parts of the country are surrounded by a boundary wall against undesirables and thieves, but in Cardiff as elsewhere (except

streets, and there is nothing in English law to prevent a woman from going to bed with any man, and even receiving money for doing so, if she wishes.<sup>1</sup> The extent, if any, to which the present situation is connived at would of course be difficult to prove. Members of the resident coloured community who deplore the unavoidable association of their district with the notoriety of Bute Street claim that the Police are in the habit of receiving "back-handers" from the café proprietors. It is also significant that during a recent case when the Police sought powers to close down one of these establishments, the defending solicitor based his plea in Court on the ground that to shut up the café in question would merely have the effect of sending the undesirables up to practise their trade in the town itself.<sup>2</sup> In the meantime, not only for the transient seafaring clientèle, white as well as coloured, but for many of the large crowds of male pleasure seekers who flock into Cardiff from the valleys and towns of South Wales on the occasion of the big rugby international matches, Bute Street continues to offer its dubious wares and services. The latter are not insignificant if the attribution of over 50 per cent. of the cases of venereal disease in mining villages and towns to a Bute Street origin can be accepted as a reasonably valid estimate.<sup>3</sup>

Of the "café" proprietors, as already indicated, men of

war-time) there is nothing to prevent the male tout from mixing with the crowd of dock-workers who normally enter, and thus acting as a go-between for women who want to advertise their addresses to the seamen.

<sup>1</sup> "In all matters appertaining to street walkers it is most important to bear in mind that in this country it is not against the law for a woman over the age of consent (sixteen) to have sexual relations with any man, be it for cash or other consideration of value or for sheer sexual gratification. The fact that giving of cash or other valuable consideration has taken place does not affect the matter in the eyes of the law: only soliciting by the woman on the street brings her within the reach of the law. A street walker as such, providing she has not solicited in public, may receive and entertain in her rooms as many men as she can endure, but this brings the owner of the house within the reach of the law." *Traders in Women*, Joseph Crad.

<sup>2</sup> Several persons with whom the writer discussed the point were inclined to agree strongly with the force and logic of this argument. It is possible in so far as public opinion exists on this matter, that, having regard to the circumstances, toleration of the Bute Street area is regarded as unavoidable, though not desirable. cf. also Walter Reckless, *Vice in Chicago*, p. 5.

"The wholesale closing of the houses of ill-fame, in view of the previous history of the city, was a radical step. The public officials and the police were practically unanimous for 'segregation' or 'toleration'. The Mayor was inclined to believe that segregation was the best way of handling the problem, although he suggested a popular referendum on the closing of the 'red light' district."

Against this suggestion in respect to the Cardiff Police and authorities may be put their support of the Conference on Social Hygiene's resolutions advocating a thorough surveillance of "cafés". (See footnote, p. 69.)

<sup>3</sup> 7th Conf. Soc. Hyg.

Maltese origin provide the majority, and they are given a very bad name in the district by the coloured people as well as by officials.<sup>1</sup> But not all the Maltese are engaged in this nefarious trade. Several of them keep entirely respectable and well-organised boarding houses, and a Maltese was second in command at the local A.R.P. post. Apart from "cafés", there are perhaps three rather "better-class" eating houses in Bute Street, one of which, a Chinese place, attracted before the war a "good class" city clientèle, which used to run down in the evenings by car. In terms of the history of the city itself, Bute Street is of some slight antiquity, and its construction about 1840, across what at that time was moorland, seems to have antedated by many years the urbanisation of the district it now traverses.<sup>2</sup>

## CHAPTER 4

### ITS HISTORICAL AND INDUSTRIAL BACKGROUND

#### I. THE EARLY DAYS OF LOUDOUN SQUARE

In its earliest days the Loudoun Square area, or "Tiger Bay", as it is more popularly called, appears to have been a busy iron-working centre as well as a maritime quarter. An 1895 map of Cardiff shows the Loudoun Foundry on one side of the Glamorganshire Canal and the Bute Iron Works on the other, and at least up to 1905 the sheds of the old iron-masters, dismantled and ruinous, still remained. The actual urbanization of the district can probably be traced back to the foundation of the new church of St. Mary the Virgin in 1845, and it was certainly complete some time before 1886, for a further map of the town dated that year shows all the present-day streets in being with their modern names, with the single exception of Frederica Street for the present-day Angelina Street. Loudoun Square itself

<sup>1</sup> At the same time many of these individuals are extremely patriotic. As a case in point, on one occasion a "suspicious character" in one of the cafés, thought to be a spy because he was asking strangers a large number of questions about shipping was hurried off at once by the Maltese proprietor to the Police station. He turned out to be merely an M.O.I. official collecting "copy". Several of the Maltese "cafés" also displayed handbills seeking funds for a charitable organisation in Malta.

<sup>2</sup> *Records of Cardiff*, 1905.

was offered in 1888 by the then Lord Bute as an open space for all time, and the offer was accepted by the Council.<sup>1</sup> The present facilities there, already mentioned, were constructed by the Corporation a few years ago from what had once been a bowling green and natural spring. For, cosmopolitan as the district is to-day, almost up to the time of the First World war the well-built and not unhandsome three-storey houses of the Square were the residences of a well-to-do class of sea-captains, lawyers, business people and other prosperous members of the bourgeoisie. Indeed, in the early days of Cardiff's maritime and industrial expansion, this was the "natural" location of the wealthy and rising class—outside the city itself, but within convenient distance of its centre by carriage. For their material needs there were great emporia in Bute Street where all their shopping could be done. For their spiritual needs, the original parish church of St. Mary's, which had previously stood in the city proper and was eroded and rendered derelict by the River Taff in the early part of the 16th century, was resuscitated in 1845. The older foundation had a long history, being first mentioned in 1102. The present large and imposing structure, with its internal fittings and equipment, pays full tribute to the affluence as well as the devotion of the inhabitants of the then "suburb". Much the same might be said of the present-day Methodist mission on the other side of the Square. Though its origins were historically and traditionally much less auspicious, it, too, flourished in its day; but as the chronicler of nonconformity in Cardiff puts it, "many people left the neighbourhood to reside in the (newer) suburbs, and the Church went down rapidly".<sup>2</sup> Its career as a Mission church began in 1893, and so we may take it that the more prosperous and respectable inhabitants of the area had begun some years earlier to recede before the tide of fresh immigrants whose appearance in the streets surrounding the Square was an index of the city's steady encroachment throughout the 19th century.

## 2. LOUDOUN SQUARE AS AN "ECOLOGICAL" PHENOMENON

There is much in the changes which have taken place in this area, as well as in the growth of Cardiff itself, to engage the interest

<sup>1</sup> *Records of the County Borough of Cardiff*. Council Minutes, 1880-97.

<sup>2</sup> *History of Nonconformity in Cardiff*, J. Austin Jenkins, 1901, ed.

of the American "social ecologists". The concentric and radial features which R. E. Park and other members of the school postulate in their theories of urban expansion are here apparently lacking, largely perhaps for the very natural and physical reasons which are part of the ecologists' scheme, such as the proximity of the sea. It might be argued, however, that there are other elements which do not invalidate the general theory. So far as Cardiff is concerned, it is as if there had been a compensatory bulge backwards on the north and west sides of the city, in terms of the "tertiary" and "quaternary" zones of "expansion" and "succession" as shown by such suburban areas as Ely and Mynachdy.<sup>1</sup>

There is, indeed, much in the antecedents of the Loudoun Square district itself which would endorse the general and theoretical implications of the "ecological" process, particularly as concerns the arrival of the coloured folk themselves. Until the 1880's at least, it seems possible that the actual Square and the streets immediately adjacent to it represented respectively the last and the penultimate stages of transition in the process,

<sup>1</sup> cf. R. E. Park and others, *The City*, and H. W. Zorbaugh, *The Gold Coast and the Slum*. This expansion of the city, according to Park, is thought of almost wholly in terms of its physical growth, whose typical processes can best be illustrated, perhaps, by a series of concentric circles numbered to designate both the successive zones of urban extension and the types of areas differentiated in the process of expansion.

"Such a chart represents an ideal construction of the tendencies of any town or city to expand radially from its central business district. Encircling the town area there is normally an area in transition, which is being invaded by business and light manufacture (II). A third area (III) is inhabited by the workers in industries who have escaped from the area of deterioration (II), but who desire to live within easy access of their work. Beyond this zone is the "residential" area (IV) of high-class apartment buildings or of exclusive "restricted" districts of single family dwellings. Still farther, out of the city limits, is the commuters' zone—suburban areas, or satellite cities—within thirty to sixty minutes' ride of the central business district.

"This chart brings out clearly the main fact of expansion, namely, the tendency of each inner zone to extend its area by the invasion of the next outer zone. This aspect of expansion may be called *Succession*, a process which has been studied in detail in plant ecology. . . ." (From E. W. Burgess, "The Growth of the City" in *The City*, pp. 50-1.)

It might be as well, however, to de-personify the concept which the analogy suggests. It is plainly the people themselves in their social and occupational rôle who invade the next outer zone, and who in "driving out" its previous inhabitants, succeed them and take over the sociological nature of the district into which they have come. The successive processes can be visualized in two ways; firstly, in terms of the types of people concerned, and their social and occupational standing; and secondly, as actual physical changes in the district itself.

According to the report of the present-day oldest inhabitant of the district, a Barbadian, who made his first trip to Britain in a sailing vessel to Porthcawl, and settled in Sophia Street in 1885, there were a few coloured men already about at this time, but their presence evoked nothing more than friendly comment.



Loudoun Square being a residential area of high-class single-family dwellings, and the streets north of it and nearer to the city, Angelina Street, Christina Street, etc., occupied by the slightly higher grade of worker. The next stage was presumably the movement to the suburbs of which the Nonconformist historian speaks, and the progressive infiltration of an alien and it may be supposed largely Asiatic population. At any rate, there can be little doubt that the "maritimization" of the district was complete, and the exotic reputation of Tiger Bay established, some time before the present century.<sup>1</sup>

Loudoun Square seems to have retained its previous type of inhabitant longer than the district round it, possibly because of its amenities as the only solid residential quarter in the dock neighbourhood for people with some kind of professional connection with that area. It must have stood like a veritable island amidst the swelling cosmopolitan tide around it. Bute Street, in the meantime, was acquiring its bad name. There were a number of Chinese laundries in operation about this time, and the Chinese were apparently in the habit of running opium parties. By the time of the First World war, the cafés of Bute Street, which had been originally opened as respectable and legitimate trading establishments, were notorious.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The novelist, Howard Spring, in his piece of autobiography, *Heaven Lies About Us*, writes of his experiences as an office boy at the Cardiff Docks (presumably about 1900) as follows:

"... There was fascination in the walk through Tiger Bay. Chinks and Dagoes, Lascars and Levantines slipped about the faintly evil by-ways that ran off Bute Street. The whole place was a warren of seamen's boarding houses, dubious hostels, ships' chandlers smelling of rope and tarpaulin, shops full of hard flat ship's biscuit, dingy chemists' shops stored with doubtful-looking pills, herbs, and the works of Aristotle, children of the strangest colours, fruit of frightful mésalliances, staggered half-naked about the streets; and the shop-windows were decorated with names that were an epitome of all the clans and classes under the sun. The flags of all nations fluttered on the house fronts, and ever and anon the long bellowing moan of a ship coming to the docks or outward bound seemed the very voice of this meeting place of the seven seas. It was a dirty, rotten and romantic district, an offence and an inspiration, and I loved it."

<sup>2</sup> See a letter which appeared in the *Western Mail* at the time of the 1919 riots:

"In 1916 the men of colour appealed to the Cardiff and District Citizens' Union to protect them from the pitfalls and moral perils abounding in that area. In 1917 we formed in connection with our Cardiff World Mission a coloured men's cricket club, and gave them £15 to start an Institute in Angelina Street. We secured from the Parks Committee pitches in Llandaff Fields and Roath Park. Classes for Chinese and Japanese were also established."

## 3. THE COMING OF THE NEGROES

Negro people had become established in small numbers during the '90's, and gradually worked down to Loudoun Square itself. During the war of 1914-18 their numbers were very greatly augmented by several streams of immigration. The war brought to Great Britain many coloured men who in normal circumstances would have been repatriated by the Government to their own country. For example, a large number of ships which ordinarily operated on the West African and other routes on which Negroes and other coloured seamen are usually employed, were requisitioned by the Government for transport service, and their crews left behind. About the same time, coloured labour battalions were formed for service abroad, and the men were subsequently demobilized in Britain.<sup>1</sup> In addition, a number of coloured men were brought over to Manchester and other cities to work in munition and chemical factories. The situation was similar at most large British ports, e.g. Liverpool and London. It meant, in effect, the domiciling in this country of quite large numbers of coloured men; and with the closing down of war industries and other forms of employment, very many of them flocked to such centres as Cardiff, where in the shape of seafaring, there were at least opportunities of the only kind of work open to them. It is possible, also, so far as the years between the wars are concerned, that the increased number of West Indians and West Africans at the port was due not only to the laying up of ships during the subsequent shipping depression, but to the more favourable rates of pay available there than by signing on at Liverpool. In any case, this later influx put a final seal on the changes in the character of the district and established Loudoun Square itself, with the adjoining streets, quite definitely as the coloured quarter of the city. This meant, too, that the nature of the Square

<sup>1</sup> cf. *The Keys*, publ. League of Coloured People, vol. viii, p. 22.

"During the war 200 men from coloured troops in Mesopotamia were transferred by the Government to work in the Merchant Navy. In one case a coloured seaman was forced to leave a foreign ship in Spain by the British consul and was sent to England at the Government's expense. A smaller number of coloured seamen were landed in England after the end of the 1914 war as internees from Germany, having been interned in Hamburg at the beginning of the war. Some further slight supplementation in subsequent years was probably the result of a "drift" into seafaring on the part of West Africans and West Indians who had come to this country hoping to find better paid employment, and failing to secure it had become seamen." (See p. 76.)

changed accordingly. Single dwelling houses became apartment houses, and two and three persons compressed themselves into the space that before the invasion had been occupied by one.

Such, then, was the position at the end of the First World war. There was good money to be earned at sea during the war period and up to 1919, and the coloured men prospered. But the ending of the war meant the demobilization of large numbers of white seamen who had been serving in the Navy and in mine-sweepers. With their return to the trade, and with the heavy shrinkage in tonnage employed, it was impossible to find jobs for all. The shipowners and shipmasters took the line "our own people first", with the result that quite soon there were about 1,200 coloured men out of work in the port, to whom the Government allowed 29/- per week as unemployment pay. The coloured seamen had been earning up to £15 per month during the war, and quite apart from anything else, the sudden drop in their economic circumstances was a severe one, particularly as they were in the habit of spending freely what they earned. Not unnaturally, their temporary prosperity had attracted the attentions of the fair sex to the great resentment of white seamen, who, returning home to Cardiff during the war years found that their Army and Navy pay put them at a disadvantage in this field as compared with the wealthier coloured man. Added to this was the fact that many of the demobilized soldiers were themselves unable to find employment. These seem to have been the main factors and undercurrents in the serious outbreak of racial riots which took place in Cardiff during a spell of hot weather in June, 1919, and were recapitulated in almost every port area of the kingdom where coloured men were living.

#### 4. THE CARDIFF RACIAL RIOTS AND THEIR AFTERMATH

As mentioned elsewhere, these riots have left a considerable mark on the social heritage of the coloured community, and even to-day its older members base their uncompromising attitude towards white people largely on various incidents, real as well as alleged, which then took place in Cardiff and Liverpool, and which, therefore, are worth describing in some detail. Apparently, the trouble in Cardiff began at about eleven p.m.

on June 10th, 1919, with a scuffle between some white and some coloured men at the town end of Canal Parade. A pistol shot rang out, and in a few minutes a crowd estimated at about 2,000 people had collected. A second shot was the signal for a series of fights, which extended from the immediate vicinity, down Custom House Street, along Bute Street and its side streets. Shots were fired repeatedly, and were followed by angry rushes, in which sticks and stones were freely used. In its efforts to get at the coloured men, the mob attacked a number of shops, and one in Bute Street, where coloured men lodged, was completely demolished.<sup>1</sup> Two houses in Homfray Street were extensively damaged, and a fire broke out in one of the coloured boarding houses. The pistol firing, window-smashing and skirmishes between white and coloured men went on for over an hour, by which time the fire brigade had taken a hand. Fifteen people, mainly suffering from bullet wounds and cuts, were admitted to hospital, and one of them died a few hours later.

A more elaborate assault took place the following evening in terms of what the *Western Mail* called a "Sidney Street Affair". Early in the evening, a large crowd collected near the Hayes Bridge, and the excitement eventually centred in Millicent Street off Bute Street. A house in which eight coloured men were known to reside was attacked by revolver shots from the warehouses of an adjacent wholesale grocer. The vanguard was led by two soldiers in uniform, who, on being confronted by the armed coloured men, ordered their party to drop back, and then advanced for the next onslaught with a table held up as a bodyshield. Fighting then went on within the house, the besieged men defending themselves with razor blades and a revolver, while outside a large crowd looked on admiringly. To quote the *Western Mail* again:—

"There were many brave spirits well out of the danger zone. They had allotted to themselves the task of cheering the invaders and accepting the booty as it was handed out. Old women and slatternly young women shrieked encouragement and it was a sight reminiscent of the French Revolution."

Eventually, the police and fire brigade succeeded in intervening again, and in taking the coloured men into protective custody.

<sup>1</sup> "Hadji Mahomet, the Somali priest, was reported to be living at 1, Homfray Street, and the rioters visited him. In response to the entreaties of his white wife to leave for a place of safety, the resourceful Somali clambered up a drain-pipe at the back of his house. He was immune there from the fury of the crowd while hidden on the roof, and with true Eastern Stoicism watched his residence being reduced to a skeleton." cf. *Western Mail*, 12th June, 1919.

But the excitement, with sporadic outbreaks of rioting, went on for some days. The mob was finally overawed by the presence of an increased police force and one or two War Department lorries of soldiers in full fighting order; but not before a number of unlucky Negroes had been chased by angry crowds, to find sanctuary just in time, either in a house, or behind the horses of mounted police.<sup>1</sup>

It seems fairly evident that these outbreaks were engineered by a relatively small number of persons, and it has even been suggested that a number of men were deliberately sent into the town for this purpose. The mobs which took part in the hunts and assaults seem to have been typical of their kind. Not one out of twenty members of the crowd could explain why the trouble arose. The chief comments heard were "Why should these coloured men be able to get work when it is refused us?" and there were dark references to the sex relations of coloured men with white women. The general shout was "Kill the —"; or "Lynch the —". Always "the black man" was the quarry, and whenever one was rooted out, the mob rushed upon him.<sup>2</sup> Claims for damage, mainly to property, arising out of the riots cost the Corporation some £4,000, including solicitors' fees.<sup>3</sup>

These events left no doubt regarding the precarious position of the coloured folk, especially as there were now some 1,500 of them out of work. The action of some, who took the hint and applied to the Government for repatriation, was looked upon with favour by a large section of the townspeople, amongst whom the question of racial mixture was beginning to be viewed with "an awakened conscience."<sup>4</sup> With many others, however, there

<sup>1</sup> Several coloured men who were in Cardiff at this time told the writer that for several days during the riots they were forced to remain in their houses behind boarded windows and barred doors.

<sup>2</sup> This account of the racial riots is based mainly on contemporary files of the *Western Mail*.

<sup>3</sup> *City of Cardiff. Proceedings of the Council*, 13th October, 1919.

<sup>4</sup> cf. *Western Mail*, 13th June, 1919:

"The Government ought to declare it to be part of the national policy that this country is not to be regarded as an emigration field, that no more immigrants (as distinguished from visitors) can be admitted, and that immigrants must return whence they came. This must apply to black men from the British West Indies as well as from the United States.

"In our own country the tolerance which is exhibited towards the problem (of mixture) is due not to far-fetched ideas of racial equality, but to slackness."

In apparent contradiction of the first paragraph, note *The Keys*, vol. viii, p. 22:

"West Indians, who requested to be returned home in the days of the Great War, were denied return passage and emphatically told 'This (England) is your home, you belong here'."

were serious difficulties in respect to repatriation, partly owing to family obligations and partly to the strong protests of the boarding-house keepers, to whom the coloured men were in an advanced state of indebtedness. They had literally been kept by their landlords since the Armistice and the loss of their war-work, in the expectation that the Government would provide some economic solution or help in the problem. These boarding-house keepers now threatened to eject their clients—a possibility viewed with as much alarm by the authorities as by the coloured men themselves. Finally, the situation was settled, at least partially, by an official grant of money to help out the boarding-house keepers, and by the repatriation of men who had not established an English domicile.

## 5. WHITE AND COLOURED COMPETITION FOR JOBS

In subsequent years the history and experience of the Cardiff coloured community have been similar to, and in some respects even more arduous than, those of the coloured communities in other ports of the kingdom. Fundamentally, their history depends to a very large extent upon the history during the 1921–1938 period of the British shipping industry itself—a story of a rather out-of-date merchant fleet meeting fierce and highly subsidized foreign competition for fewer and fewer freights, with diminishing profits, and unemployment fluctuating always around a high level.<sup>1</sup> In sociological terms, the ramifications of this situation showed themselves in the form of most bitter economic competition between white and coloured seamen for the greatly reduced number of jobs available. Moreover, the fact that the shipping depression was only one aspect of a general world trade slump meant that enhanced unemployment in seafaring coincided with unemployment in most other, especially manual, occupations, and rendered industrial migration, slight among seamen in any case, virtually impossible.<sup>2</sup> It was a struggle in

<sup>1</sup> For a short but interesting account of the shipping industry during the period in question, written from the point of view of the British shipowner, see R. H. Thornton, *British Shipping*.

<sup>2</sup> For example, one possible outlet, the South Wales coalfields, in which a number

which the white and majority group was bound all the time to possess the upper hand over the minority and ostensibly alien section. The position of the latter was rendered even more invidious by factors entirely beyond their control: the only course open to British shipowners remaining in the market was to keep labour costs as low as possible, and coloured firemen and stokers, provided they could be signed on abroad, were considerably cheaper than white seamen.<sup>1</sup> The coloured seamen resident or domiciled in Britain fell, therefore, between two stools. On the one hand, the uniform operation (except in one or two specific instances) of the National Maritime scale from all United Kingdom ports meant that their labour found no more favour in the eyes of shipowners and employers than that of the white sailor. On the other, they were looked upon by the white unions not as a section of the same labouring class striving for a livelihood on exactly the same basis as any other union member, but as the representatives of an altogether different and competitive category, which directly or indirectly was responsible for keeping white seamen out of work, and forcing down their standards of living. Plainly and politically inept as it is, this psychological association has affected the attitude of the unions for many years, and, largely as a result of it, individual as well as group rela-

of coloured men had previously worked, were themselves suffering an unparalleled state of inactivity.

Some idea of the wider industrial implications of the coal slump can be gained from the fact that at Cardiff itself exports of coal and coke, which totalled some 10½ million tons in 1913, were only 8½ million tons in 1923. During 1930 they fell to less than 6½ million tons, a figure lower than that recorded in any "normal" year (i.e. excluding wartime or industrial disputes). The interdependence of the coal and shipping industries at Cardiff is shown by the fact that Cardiff's prosperity peak was reached when the demand for steam coal was at its maximum. Unemployment in the steam coal valleys has been paralleled by depression at Cardiff. (Abstracted from *An Industrial Survey of South Wales*, Marquand, 1932.)

<sup>1</sup> cf. Thornton, *op. cit.*, p. 219, et seq. This writer points out that the shipping industry is one in which the vast majority of costs are common to all competitors and thereby intensify competition in respect of the remainder. Revenue in terms of freights, and port expenses, are the same for all, and all that is left with which to compete is the initial cost and upkeep of the ship and the pay and maintenance of the crew. The same writer stresses particularly the "injustice" of the high labour costs which the British shipowner is expected to bear. "How then is the British shipowner expected to compete? In the United States and Germany the liability has been passed on to the general taxpayer and the shipowner is compensated for his high labour costs. No such suggestion has been made in Great Britain. We are merely told by one set of people that our mercantile marine is an essential national asset, and by another that the employment of any but British seamen is a shoddy and unpatriotic act. Neither party offers any solution to the question of how the national asset is to be maintained, if its operating costs are compulsorily higher than those of its competitors. . . ."

tions between white and coloured seamen have been rendered demonstrably bitter as well as uncomprehending on both sides.<sup>1</sup>

## 6. SOME POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS

The battle was fought out by the unions and their spokesmen both inside and outside the House of Commons throughout the depression, beginning as early as February 1919 on lines which were to be repeated over and over again in the years following<sup>2</sup> and which seem to add very little to the original points. The procedure and the mechanism stand out clearly. It is the rôle of the Labour or Opposition representative to draw the attention of the Government to (a) the increasing numbers of alien<sup>3</sup> workers employed in the industry; (b) the displacement of British seamen by coloured crews; and (c) to suggest various legislative measures of correction, either by the employment of more

<sup>1</sup> cf. Commander Kenworthy, M.P., in the House of Commons, August, 1923. "Will the Rt. Hon. gentleman bear in mind that there is a great deal of unemployment among white seamen in our ports, and that it is very irritating to them to see black crews being continually shipped?" (Hansard, vol. clxvi, 1923.)

See also the repeated remarks of Labour spokesmen during the events leading up to the British Shipping Assistance Act of 1935, as well as later sections of this book relating to the effect of the Act on the coloured community; and for a final comment on the other point of view, note the following vigorous remarks of a writer in the journal of the League of Coloured Peoples (W. G. Brown, *The Keys*, vol. iii, p. 21). "Thus a new monument to economic ignorance and racial animosity rises in England. Fresh, vigorous and dynamic, abundantly nourished by the poisons of the depressions, this tower threatens all intelligent attitudes, and submerges the vital problems still unsettled among shipping labourers. Envious brutality is ever that way. It has recruited as fellow-artisans in this hostile construction, some strange bed-fellows. The Trade Unions, the Police and the Shipowners appear to co-operate smoothly in barring Colonial Seamen from signing on ships at Cardiff. The legislative history of this policy has been traced chronologically, and the emphasis placed upon the stipulation to carry only British seamen which accompanied the two million pound grant to the hard hit shipping industry. These plans and methods were never unknown to the coloured seamen. . . ."

<sup>2</sup> It took the form of a complaint from Mr. Neil Maclean, M.P., to the effect that the British crew of the Brocklebank liner "Malancha" had been paid off in favour of an Asiatic one. As an instance; in the old crew the British chief cook was paid £20 per month, the Asiatic one was taken on at £5 per month, etc.

The case in point, fairly typical of many others, seems to illustrate one of the gaps left by the National Maritime Board machinery. It was possible, apparently, for a shipowner to enter into a further agreement with a seaman signed on Lascar articles, i.e. as a native of India, on his arrival in the United Kingdom, provided the new agreement was for a voyage to India. This naturally meant a rate of pay lower than the N.M.B. rate ex United Kingdom. (cf. Halsbury's *Statutes of England*, p. 21.)

<sup>3</sup> With, as will be clear from the text, no little disregard for the exact significance of the term "alien", as when Col. Ropner in the debate on the Shipping Assistance Act pointed out to Mr. Greenwood that the latter's complaint of *alien* seamen being employed in "great numbers" amounted to no more than two per cent. of the whole.



British seamen or by the increase of coloured wages. To these criticisms the Government spokesman has three main replies: firstly, the amount of alien labour is really very small indeed, since the greater part of it is British, i.e., members (though, of course, non-European) of the British Empire; secondly, it is plainly not policy to discriminate between British subjects;<sup>1</sup> and thirdly, that as an industrial matter, it is beyond the scope of Government interference and is rather one for employers and unions to decide between them. To these somewhat unimaginative exchanges there are a few variant themes.<sup>2</sup> Champions of white labour offer supplementary reasons for the removal of coloured labour on the ground of the moral undesirability of its presence in this country, and of its cost to the taxpayer. Government spokesmen, on the other hand, apparently labour under a chronic inability to provide exact statistical proportions of coloured and white British seamen.

## 7. THE ALIENS ORDERS, 1920 and 1925, AND THEIR APPLICATION

It is mainly in the light of these complaints and debates, perhaps, that we should interpret contemporary legislation, such as the Aliens Order of 1920, and its successor, more significant so far as the present study is concerned, the Special Restriction (Coloured Alien Seamen) Order of 1925. The latter was an application of the older Aliens Restriction Act of 1914, whose object was the supervision of aliens resident in this country. The more specific aim of the former—the 1920 enactment—was the

<sup>1</sup> *ibid.* See also Dr. Burgin's remarks as Parliamentary Secretary to the B.O.T. in the above mentioned debate. Hansard, vol. 295.

"A large percentage of these coloured men are British subjects, and this committee will hesitate a long time before it begins to examine British nationality and put it into grades and classifications. It is no good talking about the brotherhood of men and suggest that there is some difference between a white British subject and a coloured British subject."

To this Mr. Greenwood interjected: "A difference in wages."

<sup>2</sup> The critic of the British Parliamentary form of government will find ample material in the frequent and wordy skirmishes over this matter, which, shorn of its political implications, does not seem unduly weighty in its sociological and economic implications. Indeed, the impartial student of parliamentary literature might well come to the conclusion that the main function of British constitutional procedure is to maintain the general social and political *status quo* intact as long as possible, and to defer any legislation tending towards its disruption. *cf. inter alia*, Hansard, vols. 166 and 170.

restriction of further alien immigrants to this country, unless they were in a position to support themselves and their dependants. The special force of this Order lay in the power it gave the Police to impose various restrictions on aliens, to arrest them without warrant, and to close certain clubs and restaurants.<sup>1</sup> Article 6 of the Act, however, lays it down that its provisions shall not apply to any alien seaman not resident in the United Kingdom, or to any alien who has been in the United Kingdom not more than two months since the date of his last arrival.<sup>2</sup> The succeeding and more significant Order of 1925 had the quite specific purpose of checking the influx of alien seamen, and in certain cases its effect, if not its provisions, went much further. Briefly, it brought coloured alien seamen into line with other aliens, and obliged them to register in accordance with provisions made under the 1920 Order.

The significant feature arising out of all this was that in Cardiff the 1925 Order was made applicable to *all* coloured seamen there, and obliged them all, irrespective of nationality and domicile, to register with the Police. This meant that, in effect, not only had alien seamen wishing to establish domicile in this country to prove their nationality and carry a registration card about with them; but that in Cardiff the onus was on all coloured individuals to do the same. It meant in some cases that an alien who had been admitted before 1925 and was in possession of a registration certificate from the Police was actually better off than a coloured British subject who was unable to prove his identity.<sup>3</sup> In the latter eventuality, a passport was almost invariably refused, if the examiner was at all biassed. The man was then in the position of an alien, and might not be granted a certificate unless he could prove residence in this country before the Order was issued. As an alien he could be deported at any time, though, paradoxically enough, he gained thereby a small

<sup>1</sup> Another important provision of the Act was to place on the alien an obligation to register with the Police and to obtain a Registration Certificate, which the Police could demand to be shown. Separate articles provided, also, that every alien should be in possession of a passport furnished with a photograph and duly issued not more than five years before the date of arrival, or some other document establishing his identity and nationality.

<sup>2</sup> But non-resident alien seamen who landed for discharge in the United Kingdom were under obligation to report to the Registration Officer.

<sup>3</sup> i.e. by documentary proof. A number of the men came from districts or tribes in Colonial countries where few, if any, can write, and there is no system of registration.

advantage from the point of view of employment over a passport-holding British subject.<sup>1</sup>

A large number of the Cardiff men possessed British passports, birth certificates, army and naval discharges from the 1914 war, and other evidences of nationality, and it appears therefore that in making them register as aliens the Police were under a complete misapprehension as to the nature of the Acts in question, and how they were to be applied. Satisfied, however, in their own minds that these enactments automatically made an alien of every coloured seamen in Cardiff, they went zealously to work. Threats of arrest and imprisonment were not uncommon if a man refused to deliver his passport on demand. In one case, a seaman whose passport had been taken away refused to accept an Aliens Card. He was told that he would be placed under arrest if he did not accept it, and upon inquiring how this could be done, was informed that as he was now without a passport, a Continuous Certificate of Discharge, or an Identity Card (all of which were in the hands of the Police), it would be an easy matter to arrest him outside the station for being on British territory without the necessary authority.<sup>2</sup> One section of the community, the West Indians, were told that the Acts were not

<sup>1</sup> If such a passport expires during the voyage it may be withdrawn, and the man not allowed to land in this country. His employer would then have to bear the expense of transporting him back to his own country, or any other that will accept him (cf. the Merchant Shipping Act of 1898). The provision applies specifically in the case of a native of any country in Africa or Asia, and the shipowner would also be called upon to defray the cost of his keep, should he become chargeable on the poor rate.

<sup>2</sup> The following is a specimen case study:

"X came to England in 1915, he had no passport, but in 1922 he had one issued as he intended to go to France. Subsequently, he decided to become a seaman and was engaged on a Manchester Liner which traded between Canada and Manchester. He obtained this job solely on account of the fact that he was able to produce a passport. When he arrived in Manchester, the Immigration Officer came aboard, and expressed surprise at seeing X with a passport. 'You are X, aren't you?' he said to him. 'Got a passport? You have no damn right having a British passport.' The Captain who had X's passport then gave it to the Immigration Officer who said he would send it to Liverpool to be endorsed. It was impossible for X to be paid off until his passport returned from Liverpool, and he was, therefore, compelled to remain on board for the time being. After a few days he decided to investigate why the passport had not been returned. He, therefore, went to the Immigration Officer and made inquiries about his passport. This official suggested that X should see the Police, X followed his advice and went to the Police Headquarters, armed with his discharge and identity books. The official whom he saw took these books and stamped the word 'Alien' on every leaf. The official then brought out an Alien card which had not already been prepared and requested X to apply his thumb to it. This X refused to do, arguing that such a proceeding was only necessary in the case of men who could not write. The Inspector threatened to arrest him if he did not do as he was told. When X asked how that could be done, the Inspector replied 'By sending you out of the Station, and then arresting you for being on British soil illegally.' The Shipping

aimed at them at all, but rather at the Arabs, and being thus placed in a false position of security, submitted to registration without protest. Others were led to think that registration was a mere formality which every seaman had to undergo, and as a result fell victims to the other snares. They were so convinced that the procedure did not affect their status as British subjects, that a few who had hitherto escaped the attention of the Police voluntarily registered themselves as aliens in order to observe what they thought to be the requirements of the law. In some rather extreme cases, the Police assured the possessors of such formal and evidential documents as have been already mentioned that these were now of no avail, as a new Act had come into force by which all coloured seamen became aliens and had compulsorily to be registered as such. Very often, too, men were compelled to accept Aliens Cards at the end of a voyage by virtue of threats to withhold their pay, and in the majority of cases (according to the report of an inquiry into the matter, subsequently carried out by the League of Coloured Peoples—see pp. 75, 78) it was the policy of the shipowners, acting in conjunction with the Police, to refuse to pay a coloured seaman until he presented an Alien's Certificate of Registration.<sup>1</sup>

One of the Cardiff members, Captain Evans, pointed out some of these discrepancies in the House of Commons, indicating that through no fault of their own the coloured men now lacked any means of asserting their British nationality. The Home Secretary's reply was a legalist one. Where passports were out of date or otherwise invalid, the holder had been advised to register in the absence of satisfactory proof of his identity and nationality. Discharge books could not be accepted, as entries in them were based on statements made by the holder himself. The existence or otherwise of proof that a seaman had been born in Somaliland was immaterial in any case, as such an individual was a "pro-

Federation brought pressure to bear on X and he eventually consented to take out an Aliens card.

"He then wrote to Barbadoes for a birth certificate, and when it arrived he took it to the Sergeant in charge at the Station to show that he (X) was really born in Barbadoes. The Sergeant pretended to examine the certificate, and suddenly stamped the word 'Alien' on the back. X then pasted a piece of paper over the word Alien, and sent the certificate to the Home Secretary, who punched a hole through the certificate at the spot where the word 'alien' still appeared visible through the bit of paper pasted over it. . . ." (Communicated and abstracted from MS. in connection with the League of Coloured People's Inquiry into the matter. cf. *The Keys*.)

<sup>1</sup> cf. *The Keys*, pp. 19-20.

tected person". He considered that the marking of registration certificates with the word "Seaman" should sufficiently distinguish those who held them from persons possessing certificates issued under the ordinary provisions of the Aliens Order.

## 8. THE COLOURED POPULATION AS A "MORAL" PROBLEM

It has been suggested that the unions were the mainspring of the above legislative measures, and the wider context of events was perhaps significant.<sup>1</sup> No headway had been made in the meantime against either the laying-up of British shipping or the rising figures of unemployment, which by 1931-33 included one out of every three registered seamen in Great Britain.<sup>2</sup> Government solicitude over the employment of white seamen under tropical conditions was probably a small consolation in the existing circumstances to the stokers who had been replaced by Lascars over the routes concerned.<sup>3</sup> Natural indignation at

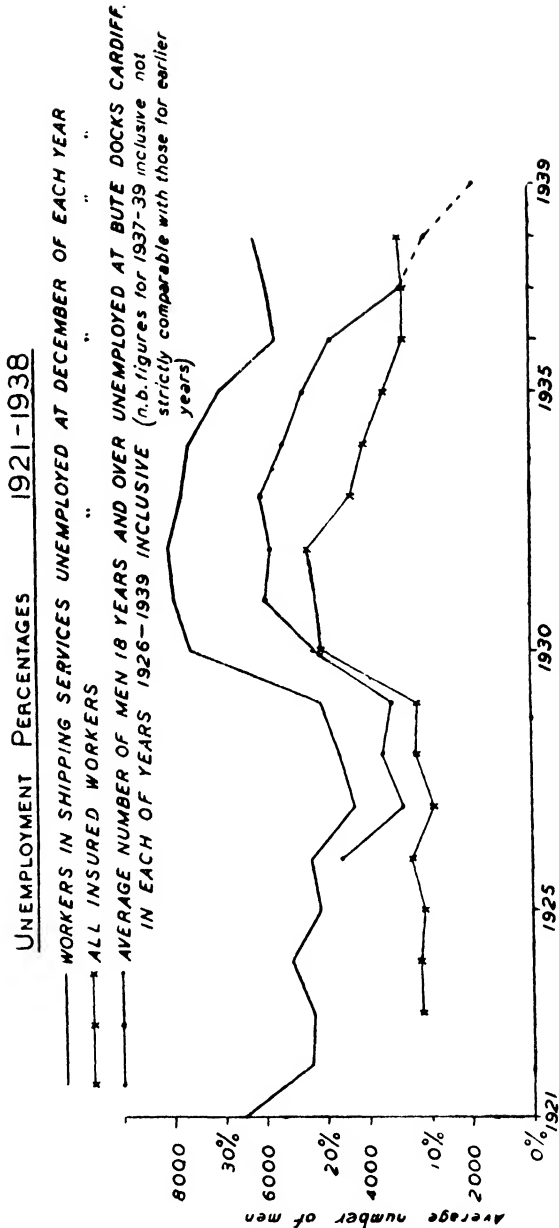
<sup>1</sup> *ibid.* p. 20. See also later paragraphs of this book. "The decision to employ white labour exclusively in the shipping industry of Great Britain was not arrived at suddenly or with undue haste. It was the outcome of a mature consideration of the trend of certain events which are intimately connected with the shipping industry . . . The plan of having these men registered as Aliens was devised and put into operation by legislative measures enacted through the influence of the Trade Unions and other labour organizations." (*op. cit.* *The Keys*, p. 20.)

<sup>2</sup> See the chart on p. 68 for a picture of the unemployment situation during the whole of the inter-war period. So far as local conditions at the five ports of Newport, Cardiff, Penarth, Barry and Swansea are concerned, it appears that in 1930, 41.4% of the insured seamen were unemployed, and in December 1937, two years after the Shipping Assistance Act (see below), there were still 32.3% unemployed (abstracted from *Industrial South Wales*, Philip Margery).

Various legislative devices were suggested, but the old difficulties remained. Plain legislation to the effect that British registered ships should carry a certain number of British seamen would mean simply that a larger number of ships would be registered abroad, and actually make the situation worse by leading to more unemployment. A bill to debar a shipmaster under a penalty of £500 from flying the Red Ensign, unless 95% of his crew were British, does not seem to have raised much enthusiasm, although the idea was taken more seriously when the payment of a cash subsidy was put alongside the flying of the national emblem some ten years later.

<sup>3</sup> cf. Mr. Runciman's reply to questions on this point (Hansard, vol. 260). It is worth recalling that white men were employed below deck as firemen and stokers on the West African run up to the end of last century, and the practice of employing Negro stokers in their place arose in a rather interesting manner. It was the custom for a white seaman who wished to go ashore at Freetown to pay an African a few pence a day to do his job in the stokehold, thereby training the latter in the job. When, as happened more frequently in those days, a white member of the crew fell ill at the port, an African would take his place in the ship and complete the voyage.

In this way it soon became the custom to sign on coloured men in this trade, and there was much to commend it from the point of view of the engineer as well as the employer. Coloured labour was not only cheaper, but often more docile than white



these and similar events was also the reason, probably, for the re-focussing of contemporary attention on various "moral"

labour. It is claimed, moreover, that a coloured crew drinks far less and gives less trouble, and is prepared to work harder than a white crew. (For a further comment to this effect see Thornton, *op. cit.*)

problems, which were said to result from the presence of the coloured men in the ports. The dependence of coloured children on the Public Assistance Committee at such places as Cardiff, Liverpool, and Swansea was pointed out to the Home Secretary, and he was asked to tighten up the regulations in regard to aliens coming to this country on contract.<sup>1</sup> The wider implications of the problem had been agitating the local councils for some time, and the fairly general consensus of opinion was that its increasing size was due to certain laxities in the regulations governing the supervision and control of licensed houses and cafés in the dock area.<sup>2</sup> At the same time it became evident that the dependence on public assistance of coloured children was due not only to the depressed economic circumstances of the households to which they belonged, but to a widespread prejudice against their own employment in virtually any sphere but seafaring. The Cardiff Juvenile Employment Committee stressed this in the following words:

"Little difficulty is experienced (in regard to the coloured children) during school-days, as they mix quite freely with the white children, and usually belong to homes which are at least equal in condition and parental supervision and care to those of the white children. It is when they leave school and desire to enter industry that the difficulties arise. . . . The industrial problem is much more acute in relation to girls, for though the boys are not as easily placed as the white boys, there is not the same prejudice shown to the coloured by male workers as by female workers. A fair proportion of the boys eventually go to sea after an interval of some months after leaving school.

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, vol. 344.

<sup>2</sup> cf. *Report of Cardiff Special Watch Committee*, 1st January, 1929, which records the following resolution:

"That in view of the grave social evils resulting from the presence in the ports of this country of large communities of coloured seamen, H.M. Government be urged to promote legislation to deal with the matter. . . ."

Similarly, a few months later at a joint conference of the British Social Hygiene Council and the British Council for the Welfare of the Merchant Marine, it was decided to draw the attention of the Government (a) to the desirability of making the hours of refreshment houses the same as those known as "permitted hours" under the Licensing Acts, or, alternatively, that Licensees of refreshment houses should receive a Licensing Justices' Certificate prior to being granted an Excise License; (b) that in view of the increase in the number of half-caste children in seaport towns, and of the future difficulty of finding employment for sons and daughters of coloured seamen who visit these shores, the Government should immediately take steps to enquire into the problem with a view to mitigating the evil, etc.

In a further report to the Watch Committee, the Chief Constable of Cardiff said in support of these recommendations:

"I am convinced that if the recommendations . . . are adopted by the Government, they will have the effect of abolishing the undesirable cafés which form the cloak for the conduct which gives rise to the greater problem of the half-caste children.

"Nothing short of legislative action will deal with this part of the problem, and it is a responsibility which the Legislature will sooner or later have to face."

In regard to girls, the Committee are faced with a serious difficulty, as they are not usually acceptable in factories and there is only the poorest type of domestic service open to them.

"An industrial survey is being conducted at the present time (1929), and employers are being approached with a view to the absorption of some of these girls in their works and factories, but the response is far from reassuring. The difficulty is not with the employers, but with the white girls employed, who strongly object to the suggestion of the introduction of half-castes. It is a very sad commentary on the Christian spirit shown, and indicates that the Colour Bar is still very strong in this country."<sup>1</sup>

A committee and a number of special sub-committees were formed at about the same time under the auspices of the Local Education Authority, whose objects were: (a) to deal with the problem of securing employment for coloured juveniles, and to obtain the active co-operation of employers for this purpose; (b) to strengthen the existing social and religious organizations working in the coloured area, and to introduce additional activities, if necessary, so that the leisure of these young people might be adequately safeguarded; and (c) to deal with the problem from a larger and more comprehensive standpoint, and to consider causes and effects from the national angle. The sub-committees reported in due course that they had been able to increase existing social activities, and even to augment organizations providing them, but that the difficult problem of finding work for the children of both sexes, more particularly the half-caste girls, remained.<sup>2</sup> "The Colour problem in the ports," as it was called, prompted a rather more extensive inquiry, which was carried out, mainly in Liverpool, by Miss M. E. Fletcher, a student of the Liverpool School of Social Science. Miss Fletcher visited a number of other ports in addition, and her report produces a great deal of evidence in support of the latter point. In Liverpool she conducted an experimental census on the prospects of the employment of coloured juveniles. Out of a total of 119 firms to which she wrote, no reply was received from 63, and negative replies from 45.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> City of Cardiff Education Committee. 14th Report of the Juvenile Employment Committee, July 31st, 1929, pp. 14-16.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, reports issued in 1931 and 1932.

<sup>3</sup> M. E. Fletcher. *Report on an Investigation into the Colour Problem in Liverpool and Other Ports*, 1930. Issued by the Liverpool Association for the Welfare of Half-Caste Children.

In addition, similar letters were sent to employers of domestic servants. The list was compiled from a list of people applying for servants to the Juvenile Employment Bureau. "The enquiry showed, however, that very few women were willing to make



## 9. THE CALL FOR GOVERNMENT AID TO SEAMEN AND SHIPPING

In the meantime, questions on the subject of the replacement of white crews by Arabs, Chinese and those of other coloured nationalities continued to multiply, and it was increasingly urged that British seamen only should be employed on British ships. The Minister could only point to the steadily decreasing numbers of foreigners who found jobs under the British ensign (see Table, p. 72), but in all this the word "British" was so obvious a stumbling-block that one member asked flatly for the exclusion of all save "English subjects from English ships" (1933). Despite scruples about anti-British discrimination, the iniquities arising out of the wage differences were becoming obvious to everybody except the shipowners.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Government interference had become as necessary from the point of view of the latter as it was from that of their employees. Discounting ships which had been broken up for scrap or sold to foreigners, by October 1932 British tonnage laid up amounted to some 860 ships of over two million tons,<sup>2</sup> and a slight alleviation in the two following years did not constitute a sufficient guarantee of the tramp industry's survival. The Government's terms were enacted in the shape of the British Shipping (Assistance) Act of 1935, and provided a compromise by which both parties, shipowners and seamen, were to be salvaged at the taxpayer's expense. The whole purpose of this Act was to enable

the experiment of engaging a coloured girl. In contrast to this situation, the Juvenile Employment Officer stated that about 50% of the white boys applying from this area are eventually placed. Openings for white girls from the district where most of the coloured people live were distinctly good."

The possibilities of shore labour for the adult coloured men were also investigated. Nineteen firms, judged appropriate, were circularized. Out of the seventeen which replied, thirteen did not employ any coloured men and had never done so; two had done so during the war, but had replaced them by white labour when this was available. Only two were found who were then employing Negroes, and these had only eleven coloured employees between them.

The Report did not receive a good reception from the coloured people themselves, possibly because its author appears to lay particular stress on certain features of the community's social and sexual behaviour, which were perhaps in need of further analysis and some qualification. When, as it would appear was the case here, a great deal of the relevant data was obtained at second hand, the danger of accentuating supposedly peculiar and even anti-social characteristics is a very real one, and it is not lessened in any real sense by the inclusion, as objective comment, of the opinions of police officials.

<sup>1</sup> It was asserted in 1935, for example, that it was possible for shipowners signing on Lascars outside Europe to employ them at one quarter of the standard National Maritime Board wage.

<sup>2</sup> Chamber of Shipping Annual Reports.

EMPLOYMENT ON BRITISH SHIPS  
(By percentages)

	1911	1921	1930	1931	1932	1936
British		57.6				
Other Parts of the Empire	73.9	5.6	{65.5	{64.4	{65.8	{72.6
Foreigners	13.8	7.7	7.4	6.6	5.4	3.2
Lascars	12.3	29.1	27.1	29.0	28.8	24.2

N.B.—Lascars include both citizens and non-citizens of the British Empire. The term is inclusive of Indian and East African nationalities.

the tramp owner to meet foreign competition, and by a limitation of shipping to raise freight rates. The shipowners were to scrap so much surplus tonnage, and in return the Government would make them a number of subsidy payments, amounting in all to £2 millions. These payments and the scheme in general were to be administered by a committee of representative shipowners (known as the Tramp Shipping Administrative Committee), so as to promote co-operation and minimize competition between British owners.

This body, the T.S.A.C., claims that the granting of the subsidy on conditions which ensured the organization of the industry and the regulation both of freight and tonnage supply immediately checked depressive tendencies and, in fact, came just in time to save British tramp shipping from disaster.<sup>1</sup> Possibly, as another commentator has suggested, the situation of the British owner was aided also by other and international factors, such as the preoccupations of Greek and Italian owners at the time.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> cf. *6th Report of the Tramp Administrative Committee*, H.M.S.O., 1938.

"The five years ending in 1934 had been the worst experienced in the history of British shipping. Since 1929 there had been a continuous and unprecedented shrinkage in the volume of overseas trade as compared with only a moderate decrease in the large surplus of world tonnage. As a result, the world depression fell in its full effect upon the open freight market upon which Tramp owners operate. In 1933-34 the freight index was 25-30% below the 1929 level, the full effect of which was seen in the laying up by April, 1935, of 126 British tramp vessels or 396,000 gross tons of British shipping, and the increasing transfer of British vessels to foreign flags. In the desperate competition of the world's increased tonnage for a share in reduced trade, freights were forced down to a level which for most ships failed to cover even bare operating costs."

<sup>2</sup> cf. W. Arthur Lewis, *Economica*, vol. 8, 1941. "The Inter-relations of Shipping Freights."

The fact remains, nevertheless, that the middle and latter part of 1935 brought such a recovery both in terms of shipping and seamen employed that there was actually a shortage in some ranks of seamen at the south-western ports. In view of the fact that the average number of men unemployed during 1935 at the Cardiff Bute Docks was 5,236, the latter point obviously requires some explanation. It is to be found in the terms regulating the payment of the subsidy itself, to the effect that when it was claimed, first preference should be given to firemen and seamen of British nationality; though in a crew of 31-35, not more than two men might be non-British, provided they had been in British employment for five years.<sup>1</sup>

#### 10 EFFECT OF THE SHIPPING ACT ON THE COLOURED COMMUNITY

Some shipowners went so far as to anticipate the latter clause of the Act. The trouble started when two ships of the Tatham Shipping Line, which had previously carried all-coloured crews of Malays on deck, and West Indians and Africans below, changed their policy and refused to sign on men who were unable to identify themselves, although a Board of Trade official was willing to pass any one brought to him by the Captain who had a continuous discharge book. The attitude of the local union officials was that owners had a perfect right to sign on whom they wished.<sup>2</sup> Political tension rapidly increased, and on Mr.

<sup>1</sup> cf. *Second Industrial Survey of South Wales*. This was the sop it was necessary to offer the Labour interests. In the debates preceding the enactment, the subsidy proposals came in for very strong criticism from the Opposition Benches, whose attitude was made quite clear in Mr. Neil Maclean's remark to the effect that no subsidy ought to be given to British shipping so long as there was a single white British seaman unemployed. (Hansard, vol. 245. Debate on the Shipping Assistance Act.)

<sup>2</sup> Previously, the donkeyman, a West Indian, had always picked the crew. This time he did the same and took them to Barry to sign on. The Shipping Federation Officer (representative of the owners) asked each man for his birth certificate or passport, and if unable to show these the men were not signed on. The ship was delayed for a day in order to get in touch with the Superintendent of the company, whose reply was that these were owner's orders and must be carried out. In the meantime, a sister ship at Cardiff signed on two Malay sailors, brought them ashore two days later, and paid them off with a month's wages. They were told they could not sail without passports. That afternoon, however, having difficulty in getting white firemen, the company signed on a coloured crew again without passports, and the ship sailed. (From the files of the League of Coloured Peoples, London.)

Greenwood's remark in the House that he was glad to hear a report that alien seamen would not be given places in British ships, and Mr. West, another Labour member, making a strong attack on Chinese, Lascars and "coloured seamen" in general, there was a rush on the part of the men concerned to obtain naturalization. In Cardiff, where some one thousand applications were received,<sup>1</sup> the reason for this trepidation was obvious. As a result of the local interpretation of the Aliens Order, these men now held no documents apart from their cards and no means of proving their British place of origin. Their present status meant, in effect, exclusion from employment on subsidized ships, despite the fact that most of them had worked regularly for Cardiff owners. Nor were matters long in coming to a head in the port. Union officials intervened against the engagement of coloured firemen, and a serious disturbance at the docks was only just averted.<sup>2</sup>

From the point of view of the coloured seamen, there was certainly every cause for alarm, for the sequence of events was quite drastic in its effects. Almost by a single stroke of the pen, many hundreds of families were deprived of their only means of livelihood, and as the Second Industrial Survey of South Wales points out:

"Unemployment was, therefore, unfairly concentrated upon these men, many cases of severe hardship occurred, and there was much discontent amongst them. . . .

"... Heavy unemployment among the Coloured population of Cardiff creates a special problem of peculiar difficulty; and it is evident that employment at sea is almost the sole opening available to these people."<sup>3</sup>

Some idea of the situation can be gained from the fact that on the 11th June, 1936, for example, out of a total of 690 unemployed firemen on the Cardiff Docks Register, 599 were coloured men. However, in the face of this common crisis in their affairs, the men set aside the religious and other differences

<sup>1</sup> See Report in the *Morning Post*, April 2nd, 1935.

<sup>2</sup> The ship involved was the S.S. "Ethel Radcliffe", which on the intervention of the League of Coloured Peoples (see the account of the later inquiry), with the Chairman of the T.A.S.C. and the shipping company, eventually sailed with the coloured members of her crew. The incident was reported under large headlines in the daily press, e.g. "Cardiff Colour Bar causes Riot"—"An S.O.S. telephoned from the signing-offices at the Cardiff docks to-day, averted serious rioting between coloured seamen and British seamen. . . ."

<sup>3</sup> *op. cit.* vol. 3, p. 217.

ordinarily emphasized within the community, and a representative committee, consisting of spokesmen from all the main sections, Africans, West Indians, Arabs, Somalis and Malays, was appointed. This organization, calling itself the Coloured Seamen's Union, sent one of its number, Mr. H. O'Connell, to London to seek assistance, which he obtained in the form of an inquiry into the naturalization question.<sup>1</sup> Thirty-five extreme cases were thoroughly studied to expose the misapplication of the Special Restriction Order, and out of the twelve of these subsequently brought to the notice of the Home Secretary, seven men immediately had their national status restored. It was estimated at this time that the effect of the Order had been to force some 1,500 men to carry the "Seaman"-inscribed Alien card about with them, and the Table on page 76 gives some idea of the subsequent readjustment. The term "Live Register" is used to indicate the active register which contains the names of coloured seamen either ashore or at sea at the time it is taken. It will be seen that between 1935 and 1937, some 1,600 names were removed, and of these it may be assumed that the greater proportion became naturalized; or, as in the circumstances it seems more accurate to put it, had their national status restored to them.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. O'Connell secured the intervention of the League of Coloured Peoples and various members of the House of Commons, and Mr. Maxton, speaking in the debate on the Government's rearmament proposals in 1935, took the opportunity of pointing out that in the case of the coloured seamen, the rights and liberties of subjects of the British Empire had been usurped rather than defended. The League's investigators claimed that they found in Cardiff:

"A canvas crowded with strange figures; shipowners, aldermen, police, trade unionists, pulling from various angles a net which has entangled people from all over the British Empire. We lived in a compact community . . . a settled, orderly community, trying with desperate success to keep respectable homes under depressing conditions. . . . We met men as British as any Englishman, forced by fraud to register as aliens, after living here since the war; charges and counter-charges; misleading newspaper reports; men in authority bellowing 'repatriation'; muttered resentment against British children being called 'half-castes'; and dominating everything, an imminent danger that deliberate trickery would mean for these men and their families expulsion from British shipping and ultimately from Britain." (*The Keys*, p. 4.)

<sup>2</sup> According to the investigators, the following cases were amongst the material they examined: eight persons who were in lawful possession of British passports; seven persons who had been in regular and lawful possession of British passports; thirteen persons, claiming British nationality, who were in lawful and regular possession of British Mercantile Marine Identification Certificates; fifteen persons with honourable records for Military Service, mainly in the 1914 war; nineteen persons who had lived in Britain longer than ten years, of whom three had resided here thirty years or more; twelve from twenty to twenty-nine years; and four between ten and twenty years. (cf. G. W. Brown, "Investigation of Colonial Coloured Seamen in Cardiff" *The Keys*, pp. 18-19.)

## CARDIFF LIVE REGISTER—COLOURED "ALIEN" SEAMEN

	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938
Arabs . . .	993	955	859	297	209
Somalis . . .	232	240	124	116	100
Portuguese . . .	72	67	61	23	21
Indians . . .	135	124	118	17	21
Malays . . .	88	83	66	45	41
Egyptians . . .	39	37	36	20	14
West Indians . . .	328	277	196	51	47
Africans . . .	372	346	266	159	160
Americans . . .	8	8	8	3	3
Panamanians . . .	2	2	2	2	1
Peruvians . . .	1	—	—	—	—
Brazilians . . .	3	3	1	1	1
Maoris . . .	1	1	1	1	1
Others . . .	42	34	25	3	3
Doubtful . . .	153	142	138	98	87
TOTAL. . . .	2,469	2,319	1,905	835	709

## II. THE PART OF THE WHITE UNIONS IN THE CONTROVERSY

It is difficult, in view of the several conflicting factors and interests involved, to say how much of the situation described in the preceding pages was actually engineered and how much of it was inadvertent. From continuous complaints of the unions' spokesmen in the House, and from official and unofficial attacks on the coloured seamen outside, it is difficult to believe that the Aliens Order and its aftermath did not have at least the passive support of the white organizations. The National Union of Seamen, however, contended that far from wishing to dispose of the British-born coloured men, or at any rate the West Indians and West Africans, they were actually fighting their battles. They pointed to their specific recommendation, drawn up in conjunction with the Transport and General Workers Union, for the Trades Union Parliamentary Committee on the question of shipping subsidies and the conditions of seamen against the

exclusion of domiciled British crews.<sup>1</sup> It is just possible, therefore, that once again the word "British" (see p. 71), which to the ordinary citizen of this country often does not convey any meaning beyond a white citizen of the Empire, was mainly responsible for the misunderstanding.<sup>2</sup> In short, as the *Seaman* (the official organ of the N.U.S.) subsequently admitted, too much was made of the employment of aliens, as such, by union officials and other white members of the labour organizations.<sup>3</sup> There is certainly no doubt that whatever may have been the appropriate view of the problem at Headquarters, some of the local officials took full advantage of the opportunity to urge coloured repatriation, quoting the old argument of the latter's expense to the public rates.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> cf. *T.U. Parl. Comm. for the Shipp. and Waterside Indus.* Memorandum prepared by N. U. S. and Gen. Workers' Union.

"No Government assistance of any kind should be given to those Shipowners who are now making a practice of employing alien crews for their vessels, to the exclusion of domiciled British crews. It should, therefore, be a condition of any subsidy or other form of assistance that the crews of the vessels concerned should be entirely manned by domiciled British seamen." In his speech in the debate prior to the Shipping Assistance Act, Mr. Greenwood also speaks of "domiciled seamen".

<sup>2</sup> If this was a genuine misunderstanding, the Union's own report went quite a long way to foster it. See, for example, the *Report of the Manning Committee*:

"Steadily during the last three years the percentage of Chinese and Africans serving on British ships has increased—augmented by large numbers of Greeks, Malays and Spaniards. Thousands of British seamen have grown desperate owing to their enforced idleness, some having been ashore for over two years, and even now there is little or no prospect of such men getting a ship in the near future. One important shipping company in Liverpool, trading out East, has, during the past three years, discharged over 700 white British sailors, firemen and catering ratings, and replaced them by Chinamen . . ." (*ibid.*).

<sup>3</sup> cf. *The Seaman*, 1st May, 1935. "I want to say right away that not only has the question (of the employment of aliens) been seriously considered, but it has led to the wholesale dismissal of alien seamen without regard to the length of their service in ships of this country and without regard to the question of domicile . . . the men who really displaced our men in very large numbers at vastly lower rates are the Lascars (British and foreign) who number 42,475. This total does not, of course, include Chinese, who also do not receive National Maritime Board rates. So great has been the rush to get rid of the alien seamen by owners of ships entitled to the subsidies that many injustices have occurred. For instance, in one or two cases, Irishmen who were born in Southern Ireland have been classed as aliens and have been dismissed, while men, and men of colour, who have sailed in our ships for many years and pay both employment and health insurance have been dismissed."

<sup>4</sup> cf. *Western Mail and South Wales Echo*, 17th April, 1935, which reported that Mr. George Reed, Secretary of the local branch of the N.U.S., said that thousands of coloured men had been "imported" into Cardiff without any restriction. If these men were going to be displaced they should be repatriated. The question would arise otherwise as to how they were to be kept. "About eight or nine thousand have been brought to Cardiff by the shipowners, and surely they are not going to be put on the rates?" He had prepared a memorandum on the subject in which he strongly recommended repatriation.

## 12. PRECARIOUS POSITION OF THE COLOURED COMMUNITY

Eventually, as a result partly of increased "naturalization", and partly of the declaration of a less ambiguous attitude towards the matter by the N.U.S.<sup>1</sup> the situation in regard to the employment of the coloured community was largely restored, but not, as the Second Industrial Report points out, before severe hardship had been undergone. It was estimated at the time of the League of Coloured Peoples' inquiry that some 80 per cent. of the men had been on unemployment benefit most of the year from April 1934 to April 1935, and that their home life was reduced to a bare subsistence level. The minimum comforts for women and children were obviously lacking in many instances, and a balanced diet was, and in a few cases had been for over four years, absolutely impossible. The events as a whole left a mark of indelible bitterness on the community itself, and its repercussions (see p. 29) are strongly felt at the present day. The League of Coloured Peoples' commentary concludes:

"While the people are far from emaciated physically, there can be little doubt that personal resources to withstand illness or an epidemic are entirely wiped out. An epidemic beginning in Tiger Bay could sweep over the bridge and menace the entire city; or, considered another way, an epidemic sweeping from the City into the Bay would be relatively free to exhaust itself. No more convincing realization of the economic stupidity saturating the Cardiff attempt to reduce to starvation a section of the City's population can be imagined than such an unwanted catastrophe.

"Social development and cultural advancement is almost nil. Even church attendance is denied one family, whose black father and brown children are not welcomed. From families on all sides one hears declarations of a similar indifference to the Churches and missions in the Bay. Apparently there are no prospects for absorption of these children in the responsible grooves of the general social order. Secondary education and industrial employment are practically closed to them. Unfortunately the sentiment of the city is to reject and restrict the 'half-castes'. A Cardiff public official is accused of calling for legislation to 'put a stop to the breeding of such children'. Expressed opposition to receiving the girls as menials in domestic service, forces them to positions where they are physically and financially exploited. One wonders why such meagre social opportunities and cultural facilities do not foster more drinking, rampant gambling, and unrestrained prostitution. These social activities are to be found in every industrial centre, depression or no depression, coloured or non-coloured. Cardiff is far from being an exception. As it now stands, it is decidedly an uninspiring environment for an ever-increasing child population."

<sup>1</sup> W. G. Brown, *The Keys*, p. 21.



The economic plight of the coloured population, thus described, has indeed to be seen in perspective. The implications of the 1935-36 trouble were severe because they considerably accentuated what for a long time had been a chronic condition. A large number of the men were continuously out of work, and, having thus exhausted their Unemployment Benefit, were forced on to the Relieving Officer for help. The same applied in the case of seamen who, lacking domiciliary rights in this country, were ineligible as subscribers to the Scheme itself. In 1930, for example, the Public Assistance Committee allowed relief at the rate of 5/- per head per week on behalf of some 250 Arab and 300 Somali seamen and firemen, whose keep during a long period of the shipping depression had brought their boarding-house keepers to the end of their resources.<sup>1</sup> The latter undertook the debt on behalf of their clients, and it was in fact honoured to a considerable extent when trade improved.

These payments of out-relief to the coloured community in general give some idea of the precarious nature of its economic position throughout this period. If we accept broadly the distribution of population in the maritime and other wards, as outlined at the close of the previous chapter, the illustration is quite striking. The accompanying chart shows the approximate average payment *per capita* in the various wards of Cardiff during the period 1932-39 inclusive. Nothing like precise population figures are available for South Adamsdown, but it is suggested that 5,000 persons is a reasonable figure for the half ward comprising the area south of the Great Western Railway bridge, and including Loudoun Square and the Patrick Street sector. It will be noticed that Adamsdown Ward along with Central Ward incurred the highest expenditure of any ward in the city, and that the south end of the former ward shows a *per capita* expenditure about one and a half times as great as any ward.

<sup>1</sup> Payments were made direct to the boarding-house master, it being understood that this represented the bare cost of food and did not cover any payment for lodgings, which the proprietors were willing to continue to provide. Careful inquiry was made into each case, and recent arrivals in the town were excluded from the allowance. The arrangement was continued for some 6-7 months, when application was made by the Council in certain selected cases for certificates of deportation under the Aliens Order. Thereupon, the boarding-house keepers approached the Committee and undertook to remove the Arab seamen from chargeability if the Committee would take no further action to deport them, and on the Committee agreeing, the relief was discontinued (*communicated*).

The Cardiff P.A.C. authorities claim that no special scale of relief was officially adopted to deal with these rather numerous applications from the coloured men, but that generally speaking the Relief sub-committees took the view that coloured seamen, especially Arabs, were accustomed to a lower standard of living than their white fellow-workers in the trade, and adjusted the grants made accordingly. The Unemployment Assistance Board

### OUT RELIEF. P.A.C. 1932-1939 INCLUSIVE

	<i>GABALFA</i> £0.35
	<i>SOUTH</i> £0.45
	<i>CATHAYS and PENYLAN</i> £0.46
	<i>PLASNEWYDD</i> £0.57
	<i>CANTON and RIVERSIDE</i> £0.57
	<i>LLANDAFF</i> £0.75
	<i>GRANGETOWN</i> £0.80
<b>Average £0.97</b>	
	<i>ADAMSDOWN</i> £1.44
	<i>CENTRAL</i> £1.48
	<i>ADAMSDOWN SOUTH</i> £2.44

at its advent adopted the same practice, and this meant in effect that instead of the basic rate of 15/- per week allowed in the case of a man living alone, a payment of 12/- per week was made to those who were judged to be living "communally", i.e., sharing a common pot. The differentiation was a source of considerable dissatisfaction amongst members of the community, who resented its implication that because a coloured man is able

to live more cheaply his needs are less great.<sup>1</sup> However, the policy of adjustment was endorsed by the Minister of Health in a subsequent answer in the House,<sup>2</sup> and from the point of view of the Cardiff committee the administration of this kind of relief was not without its complications. The authorities claim, in fact, that their treatment was more generous than that at most other ports, with the result that they had to cope with a gradually increasing influx from other centres.<sup>3</sup>

### 13. CAPTAIN RICHARDSON'S SURVEY OF MARITIME CARDIFF

It is natural, perhaps, though at the same time paradoxical, that the peculiar circumstances of the community should have invited the apparent censure as well as the curiosity of social investigators. About the time of the Shipping subsidy, Captain F. A. Richardson reported on the welfare and conditions of the Mercantile Marine. In his anxiety to paint as graphic a picture as possible of the social diseases, lack of amenities, under-employment and destitution common to all contemporary ports, Cardiff undoubtedly provided him with a striking example, but unfortunately, the Captain seems to have interpreted it mainly in terms of the coloured population as a special social problem. Given such an angle, it is easy to see how, even unintentionally, a picture is built up in which socially disapproved attributes of

<sup>1</sup> It was pointed out that the benefit was small enough in any case: if a man pays 6/- for a room and 1/6 for fuel (a normal claim), 7/6 is not too much for his other needs, whether he lives communally or not. "To take 20% off his benefit, leaving 4/6 for food, etc., seems preposterous. The principle is unsound because anyway it discourages economy; loss of 3/- benefit is enough to encourage men to live separately once more, and a wholesale application of this principle would mean that a careful housewife gets less benefit than a careless, wasteful woman." (Quoted from *The Keys*, vol. 5, No. 4, p. 7.)

One or two coloured men with whom the author discussed this past event went so far as to assert that not only was a differential scale adopted as between white and coloured, but also as between various coloured nationalities themselves. The purpose of this was said to be "to set the coloured people against each other". It is, of course, possible that differently scaled payments were made according to the circumstances of the case, but there is no evidence to hand to indicate that the principle of adjustment was extended in the way suggested, and it is probably best regarded as an illustration of the working of the "racial myth".

<sup>2</sup> cf. Hansard, vol. 346, April, 1939.

<sup>3</sup> A large number of seaports refused to grant outdoor relief at all, and offered only institutional relief. South Shields was a notable example, with the result (it is claimed) that after a few days in the Institution, the seamen took their discharge and did not seek further assistance there.

an alien group not only stand out significantly, but seem to be a direct result of that group's diversities of race, custom and creed.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, in this light, it is easy to give the impression that social behaviour characterized as "immorality" is something constitutional, or even endemic to certain cultures. Whatever may have been the intentions of the investigator, his comments on hybridization as well as disease ran riot through a city which had never really concealed its antagonism towards its alien guests.<sup>2</sup> Mere statements of fact such as tuberculosis and infant mortality rates acquire an entirely new emotional and sociological significance when they are associated with minority groups, and Cardiff public opinion was quite firm about its condemnation:

"The problem of the coloured population in our seaport towns . . . demands immediate Government action. Not only the social amenities of the white man's country, but the best interest of the coloured people themselves are in issue.

"There is no reason for sentimentality in this matter. Let him who pleads the justice of the coloured man's settlement among us read the report's references to venereal disease and the heavy toll of tuberculosis among our guests. Many of them are citizens of the British Empire; many did fine work in the war. Neither of these considerations should blind us to the plain fact that they do not belong to the social system we have evolved in these islands. Repatriation may involve hardships, and it is our obligation to make it easy for them to return to their homelands, where we will continue to carry the 'White man's burden'. We can no longer tolerate that burden on our doorstep."<sup>3</sup>

Coming as it did at a time when the issues over "alien seamen" were at their height, the attack was met with spirit by the coloured community, and the excitement subsided as quickly as it had

<sup>1</sup> cf. Captain F. A. Richardson's Report on a survey conducted by a joint committee of the British Social Hygiene Council and the British Council for the Welfare of the Mercantile Marine. Quoted also by the *Western Mail and South Wales Echo*, 8th July, 1935:

"Cardiff has before it a social problem that cannot as yet be solved. Hundreds of Arabs and other coloured seamen have settled in the city. . . . They construct their own places of worship in ramshackle sheds behind their lodging houses, and they mate with the type of women who are willing to accept them because there are none of their own kind to be had. . . . Morality and cleanliness are as much matters of geography as they are dependent on circumstances. The coloured men who have come to dwell in our cities are being made to adopt a standard of civilization they cannot be expected to understand. They are not imbued with moral codes similar to our own, and they have not assimilated our conventions of life. . . . They come into intimate contact with white women, principally those who unfortunately are of loose moral character, with the result that a half-caste population is brought into the world."

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.* "The half-caste girl is characteristically disinclined to discipline and routine work, and efforts made to encourage and train her have mostly met with failure. By nature and environment, and by the handicaps of colour and common prejudice, these girls have very little chance but to sink to an even lower level."

<sup>3</sup> *Western Mail*, 7th July, 1935.

arisen.<sup>1</sup> Numerous white people resident in the coloured district wrote letters characterizing the report as "misleading", and pointing out its lack of objectivity. The investigator himself made clearer the fact that his main aim had been to point out the serious defects in the social amenities of the district;<sup>2</sup> and the injustices of the Shipping Act, as they became better known, all contributed towards a mild revulsion in popular attitudes towards the coloured people. Subsequent visitors to the community reported that the coloured folk were patient and peaceful in the face of their difficulties, and a *Daily Express* correspondent, on a tour of British cities, commented in his paper in even stronger language on the lack of opportunity and the degree of colour prejudice which still prevailed in the city. But the country was not out of her period of economic trial, and the public in general was no doubt satiated and tired of hearing about distressed areas, particularly in South Wales.

#### 14. THE SPIRIT OF PERSISTENCE

The coloured population seems subsequently to have fallen back into welcome, if arduous, anonymity, to cope with irregular employment, differential P.A.C. and U.A.B. rates, and juvenile unemployability in the same way as it has met similar difficulties throughout its brief existence—by mutual aid, by a persistent and almost unshakeable belief in their rights as British nationals, and by virtue of sheer necessity. Against such dogged persistence talk about repatriation—even if the idea were a practical proposition, and plainly for the older men at any rate migration is

<sup>1</sup> Although several requests were made during the period studied for an enquiry into the problem at the ports, the Government seems to have been very apathetic, if not averse, towards the matter (cf. Hansard, vol. 227, Capt. Evans' question to the Home Secretary).

<sup>2</sup> cf. Captain Richardson's reply in the *Western Mail* (10th July, 1935):

"From the Great Western Railway bridge in Bute Street to the waters of Penarth flats there is no form of diversion other than that provided by the Missions. True, there is a cinema which is shewn in the Wesleyan Chapel, but beyond this there does not appear to be any legitimate form of diversion, and there certainly appears to be prejudice in the minds of those dwelling on the city side of the Great Western Railway bridge against members of the coloured fraternity taking their normal places in the cinemas of the city.

"Therefore, we have this situation of hundreds of men, women and probably worst of all their children being unable to enjoy the normal facilities of everyday life. Their provision of two or three swings and a sandpit in Loudoun Square does not appear to be an adequate means to this end."

no longer so—is like so much water on a duck's back. The older men have now been settled here for thirty, even in some cases for forty years. They have “grown into the place”, and however sentimentally they may sometimes speak of their tropical homeland, it is the nostalgia of self-pity, not of wish-fulfilment. With the women—as the sociological description which follows should show—the situation is somewhat different. Like the men, they too are tied to the place, and for the significant reason that, having married and lived there with a coloured man, “return home” is virtually impossible, and in many cases has lost any meaning. But few of them seem to possess the sense of locality so evident amongst many of the menfolk, despite its being also the place where their children were brought up. In effect, therefore, the determination to persist is generally evident, and the sentiment of local association seems to be amongst the strongest psychological characteristics which the younger generation have acquired.

Such then was the background of the Cardiff coloured community up to the time of the Second World war. It represents a history which has been shared to a greater or lesser degree by other coloured communities in this country, and, in its economic aspects, also to no small extent by white members and families of the same occupational class. In most of the larger ports, the colour bar has operated fairly generally, and the coloured populations have been relegated to the slums, or more dilapidated quarters of the town; there has been the same difficulty in finding work for the juveniles, and shore work for the men. Nevertheless, in several important characteristics there are significant differences between the Cardiff population and that of other ports, say Liverpool. In that city, and in London, there were also severe race riots at the end of the 1914-18 war, and subsequent discrimination against the coloured seaman was not infrequent. But in Cardiff it would seem as if the concentration of coloured families in one small area of the town has led to the creation of a special focus of prejudice, broken up only by rather sporadic attempts at amelioration.

The remarks of another reviewer of industrial South Wales, written of the Cardiff community immediately before the present survey, may fitly conclude this section:

“This (Shipping) subsidy is now at an end, and many of the men concerned have wisely become naturalized, but it seems that there is still a much greater

proportion of 'coloured' than of 'white' seamen unemployed. These men have practically no hope of alternative employment; their labour was used by the local shipowners when it was needed. To-day they are just a 'pool' of labour on which to draw when necessary; they live close to the docks and rarely visit the centre of the city, and their existence seems to be unrecognized by many of its inhabitants. A sight of Bute Street, the highway to Bute Docks, brings home the extent to which Cardiff still lives, or fails to live, on the diminished coal output of the valleys at her back. Many of the shops are closed, others appear to be on the point of doing so, most are devoted to the sale of cigarettes and the cheapest of meals. An air of misery hangs over the whole long streets; a dreariness far beyond that of the mining districts."<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER 5

# DEMOGRAPHY, AMENITIES, HEALTH AND PHYSIQUE

## DEMOGRAPHY

### I. NATIONAL AND RACIAL COMPOSITION

It is very difficult to obtain even an approximate idea of the exact size and composition of the community. No official register of the names or numbers of the coloured men, their wives and children is available, and this is unfortunate, since without it generalizations on social or economic topics are apt to lack proportion. The difficulty is augmented, also, by the "floating" nature of much of the population, and as a house-to-house count was impracticable it is impossible to say accurately how many people the community comprised at the time of this investigation. From other particulars, however, it is possible to make with, probably, a reasonable degree of accuracy, a number of deductions with a general bearing on the demography of the district.

Until about mid-1940 an official record was kept of the alien seamen in the port, or rather of all seamen unable to prove their British nationality. This "Live Register" was mentioned in the last chapter. Its latest return (1942) indicates the presence of the following nationalities (in percentage terms):

Arabs . . . . .	30
Somalis . . . . .	20
Africans . . . . .	22
West Indians . . . . .	6
Malays, Indians, Portuguese and "doubtful" making up the remaining	32

<sup>1</sup> Philip Margery, *Industrial South Wales* (1940), p. 122.

This Return obviously takes no account of that majority of the coloured folk resident in the area who were born there or who hail from British colonial or protected territory, such as West Africa, the West Indies, Aden, British Somaliland, etc. These were estimated by the Police some years ago to number some 3,000, and it was estimated at the same time that "half-castes" of school age or over would by 1938 number some 250, together with some 120 under school age, making a total of some 3,370 in all in that year.<sup>1</sup> There is reason to believe, however, that the "half-caste" figures were seriously underestimated when allowance is made for the Arabs. The Moslems to-day claim that their children number some 1,000, i.e. of Arab, Indian, Somali, Malay or Egyptian parentage. If this figure is anything like correct it suggests that the present Anglo-Negroid numbers are also greater than the 1938 estimate allows. On this broad basis, and taking into account the white wives, other dependents, and more transient inhabitants, a total in the neighbourhood of 6,000 might be postulated for all the population covered by this study.

It is possible to approach the question of national and racial composition with slightly more confidence on the basis of the parentage of some 200 children, mainly in attendance at the largest school in the area. Inaccuracies in the figures below, which analyse this sample in percentage proportions, probably concern mainly the Arabs and the Maltese, the latter of whom as Roman Catholics might be expected usually to send their children to a denominational school. A number of children of less representative nationalities, Chinese for example, attend other schools in the district, and childless couples or unmarried men are not allowed for in this deduction.

White children (including a few of European continental nationalities, such as Norwegian) made up some 19 per cent.

Children with Arab, Somali or Egyptian male parents and white mothers made up some 19 per cent.

Children of Anglo-Negroid parentage made up some 47 per cent. In the majority of cases the Mother was white. About 13 per cent. of these were products of the first generation of crossing.

The remaining 14 per cent. of the sample comprised children with Spanish, Portuguese, Greek, Egyptian, or Somali parents on both sides; and further crosses between Indian, Afghan, and Malay males and white females.

<sup>1</sup> cf. Appendix to the Fletcher Report.



The parents consisted of:

<i>Males</i>		<i>Females</i>	
	Per cent.		Per cent.
White . . . . .	25	White . . . . .	81
West Indians . . . . .	19	Anglo-Negroid . . . . .	11
West Africans . . . . .	23	Anglo-Chinese, Egyptians, . . . . .	
Arabs . . . . .	14	Somalis, etc. . . . .	8
Somalis, Maltese, Indians, . . . . .			
Greeks, etc. . . . .	19		
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	100		100 <sup>1</sup>

Another approach in terms of the composition of the male part only of the coloured population is afforded by the official return of "Coloured Alien Seamen" in the year immediately previous to the Shipping Assistance Act, when, it will be recalled, most of the men were registered under the 1925 Aliens Order. If we exclude for the moment the white families, the 1934 composition compares with that of 1941, as estimated above, as follows:

	Per cent.
Arabs . . . . .	40
West Africans . . . . .	15
West Indians . . . . .	13
Somalis . . . . .	10
Indians . . . . .	6
Malays . . . . .	4
Others . . . . .	12
	<hr/>
	100

## 2. RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS

It will already be evident that its great diversity of racial types makes the Loudoun Square district a happy hunting ground for the physical anthropologist. He would probably do well to begin his classification on the broad basis of division between Caucasoid and Negroid, following up with further subdivision. Caucasoids will then comprise not only the English, Welsh and other British inhabitants, chiefly women, representing the main "Nordic" and "Mediterranean" racial elements in the British

<sup>1</sup> In the course of his anthropometric investigation of racial crossing the writer collected the genealogies of some 240 White and 220 Anglo-Negroid children from Cardiff, Liverpool, and Hull (including the sample above mentioned). He estimates that some 51 per cent. of the male parents of the "mixed" children come from West Africa, some 36 per cent. from various West Indian islands, and that the remaining some 13 per cent. were born in this country, being for the most part themselves of Negroid and White parentage. (*Unpublished material.*)

population, but Indians, Egyptians, Arabs, Spaniards, Greeks, and the other European inhabitants of the district. Of the latter the Arabs alone require any special comment. They are mostly of the Himyarite type described by Haddon, with jet-black hair, often "European" narrow face, medium stature and the almost white skin common to the peoples of south-west Arabia. The Negroid category will include the West Africans, who comprise "Soudanians" as well as members of the "true" Negro race from the Guinea Coast, mainly the latter. Medium to tall in stature, they are marked by their dark brown to black skin, long heads, thick everted lips, and woolly hair. Many of the West Indians have similar physical characteristics, and appear to possess little, if any, Caucasoid ancestry. As many of them come from such islands as St. Lucia, Barbados, etc., where the proportion of Negroid in the racial amalgam is considerably greater than in Jamaica, their racial affinities are equally clear. The Somalis may conventionally be classified under the same Negroid category, although the "Erythraean" racial group in which it is usual to include them is distinguished by characteristics which bear obvious witness to the more recent "hybrid" origin of its members. The Cardiff contingent is typical, with its black, often wavy hair, elongated face, rather thin lips, well-shaped nose, and brown-black skin; they are sometimes tall and of slender build.

A similar classificatory approach to the hybrid section of the population, i.e. the children of mixed blood, presents a less simple problem. From the non-statistical point of view their individual differences appear at first to be greater than the variation in the parent races, but this is probably because visual attention tends to concentrate on specific characters such as shape of nose and colour of skin which differentiate racially and with the greater clarity the stocks concerned. Yet speaking statistically, and on the basis of a larger number of characters, including various head and face dimensions, there was no reason to suppose that variability amongst the "hybrids" was appreciably greater than amongst a sample of "white" children with whom they were compared.<sup>1</sup> The small size of the present samples does not permit generalization, but it is worth mention that after examining nine well-known studies of racial mixture in various

<sup>1</sup> cf. K. L. Little. "Racial Mixture in Great Britain: Some Anthropological Characteristics of the Anglo-Negroid Cross," *Eug. Rev.*, Jan., 1942. The samples compared comprised 90 children of Anglo-Negroid parentage and 40 of "British" (or, technically speaking, Caucasoid) parentage.

parts of the world, Trevor came to the conclusion that hybrid variability does not, on the whole, tend to be peculiarly high or low, and that the distributions of quantitative characters are approximately normal in form and, so far as can be judged, apparently always unimodal.<sup>1</sup> In the present case the average Anglo-Negroid child was medium-headed, medium-faced and medium-nosed, with black frizzy hair, and unexposed skin yellowish-white, becoming yellowish-brown on the face and back of the hands; his size and stature was approximately the same as that of the average "white" child with whom he was compared. The Anglo-Arab cross, as seen in a small number of subjects, appeared to be rather shorter in stature and lighter in weight than the white child. Difference in skin colour is scarcely appreciable, despite a certain sallowness on the part of the Arab and a lack of the ruddy complexion often found in the "English" child. The faces of the former were also narrower.

Amongst those Anglo-Negroid children with more Caucasoid than Negroid ancestral elements, an occasional reddishness was found in the hair, and white and brown freckled faces with the pigment showing up in patches were similarly noticeable in some instances. In others, the sallowness of the skin and the darker eyes were the only features which distinguished their bearers from "English" children. So far as could be gathered, skin colour followed a normal distribution throughout the sample, but the preponderance of darker-pigmented eyes and hair pointed to the operation of Mendelian factors in these respects. The samples of "English" children provided cephalic indices of 78—medium-headed—which is in conformity with available data concerning the population of these islands. Hair colour and eye colour ranged widely with some degree of uniformity from the lighter to the darker shades.

### 3. RELATIVE STABILITY OF THE COMMUNITY

In order to gain further information regarding the relative stability as well as the composition of the community, Parliamentary and Municipal Voters' lists for the years 1930 to 1939

<sup>1</sup> cf. J. C. Trevor. "Some Anthropological Characteristics of Hybrid Populations," *Eug. Rev.*, vol. 30, No. 1, 1938. Trevor also concludes that the mean values of quantitative characters are intermediate in the hybrid population where there is a clear distinction between the parental groups. The present data were in agreement on this point.

inclusive were consulted,<sup>1</sup> and the streets indicated on the Dockland map as having an approximate coloured density of some 80 per cent. were used as a "control area". A rough indication can be obtained in this way of "married persons", "non-attached persons" (i.e. unmarried or living apart from husband or wife), and even of "lodgers" (i.e. persons shown as of non-permanent domicile and having surnames different from that of the occupier of the house wherein they reside at the time); but the lists do not include the names of persons under 21 years of age, or of those not of British nationality.<sup>1</sup> Once again, therefore, the estimates arrived at can be accepted merely as a broad indication of a number of possible tendencies. In order, for example, to obtain an estimate of the total size of the "control area" it was assumed that for each married couple two children under the age of 21 might be included. On this basis it was calculated in the period 1936 to 1939 inclusive some 39 per cent. of this "control population" were married persons. Another district, non-coloured, and of a working-class character, in the north end of the same Ward was treated for a single year, 1938, in the same way, and showed a married proportion of some 42 per cent. An estimate of the married proportion in the "control area" in the same year showed some 40 per cent., and it might therefore be tentatively suggested that there is a close correspondence in this respect between the coloured and the other working-class people thus sampled.

Similarly, the sex ratio in the case of the Loudoun Square "control" worked out at 1.04 in favour of the males, and thus provided an interesting correspondence with Adamsdown ward as a whole, which with 9,001 males to 8,208 females (1.1) was the only ward in the city with a ratio of this type. Both examples are presumably evidential of the occupational character of this ward.

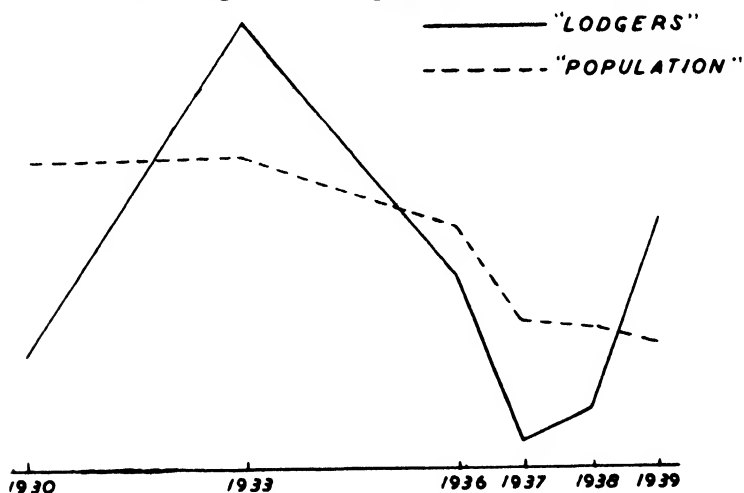
It is, perhaps, reasonable to suppose that the relative residential stability of a community is shown largely by the size of its temporary or "lodger" proportion. From the last available Census figures (1931) it appears that some 19 per cent. of Adamsdown's (then) some 17,000 inhabitants come under this category, and this proportion is significantly greater than that of persons in any other Ward listed as living otherwise than "in a private

<sup>1</sup> The number of non-Britishers in the "control area" itself is likely to be small in any case. Bute Street, which is omitted from it, is the major lodging-house quarter where one would expect most "aliens" to reside. This point is substantiated by Loudoun Square's estimated "lodger" proportion of some 10 per cent. compared with some 60 to 70 per cent. in an adjacent part of Bute Street.

family". Central Ward with some 12 per cent. and Riverside with 9.5 per cent. come nearest in this respect.<sup>1</sup> A reasonable explanation of the higher proportion of "lodgers" in Adamsdown is its large number of boarding-houses, and in that respect it may be assumed that the proportion of "lodgers" in the coloured quarter is no less than that in the ward as a whole. On the other hand, there are indications that the coloured community has been becoming more settled in recent years, and this point is brought out by the attached graph (compiled on the basis of the Voters' List) from which it would appear that, following a steady decrease over the past ten years, the proportion in question is now some 10 per cent. of the whole. A further check on this is afforded by the lists of persons "no longer qualified to vote" (presumably because they have left the district) at the end of each year. The figures below supply further evidence of a fairly uniform decrease in "emigration" so far as the Loudoun Square area is concerned, even allowing for the selection of three arbitrary *lustrae*:

PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION LEAVING DURING THE  
YEARS 1932-3, 1935-6, 1938-9<sup>2</sup>

From Loudoun Square area . . . . .	35.3	32.4	31.5
From the whole of Adamsdown Ward . . . . .	23.8	22.4	26.1
From the Ward excluding Loudoun Square . . . . .	21.8	20.8	22.9



<sup>1</sup> The proportion for South Ward, the other dockland area of the city, was 4.17 per cent., and the city as a whole showed the same proportion.

<sup>2</sup> These figures are based on returns for adults only. A large part of the Loudoun Square "turnover" consisted of married couples as well as the more obvious "lodger" category, and so the relatively high proportion of departures from there as well as from Adamsdown as a whole cannot be accounted for entirely in terms of the large number of boarding houses in the area.

The Voters' Lists provide a final comment on the relative instability of the coloured community compared with other parts of the city. It appears that only one out of every three adult residents in the Loudoun Square control area has been established in his or her present home for less than two years; that only some 30 per cent. of the present inhabitants have lived there for twelve or more years; and that only some 5 per cent. have been in residence in the district for twenty-eight or more years. In terms of the "control population", this last finding would suggest that some sixty of the present inhabitants have been in residence since well before the First World war.

There is the possibility of a correlation between this migratory tendency and certain economic factors.<sup>1</sup> Examination of P.A.C. out-relief payments for the various Cardiff wards for the year ending March 31, 1938, in terms of ratio of total payments to population size, showed a *per capita* figure for Adamsdown of £1.50. This was the largest figure for any ward, and compared strikingly with the lowest of £0.31 *per capita* for Llandaff, whence the percentage of departures during the same period amounted to some 18, significantly less than Adamsdown's some 26 per cent.

## GENERAL AMENITIES

### 4. HOUSING AND HOMES

We have already mentioned Cardiff's boast that the city contains no slums. The term itself is obviously a relative one, but it must certainly be admitted that in comparison with the narrow, lightless and soot- and smoke-infested streets and courts of other industrial cities in this country, including a large part of the dockland of Liverpool, the Cardiff working-class districts show up on the whole very favourably. Nor, with some qualification, is the Loudoun Square area any exception to the rule. It lies somewhat low, and on occasion its houses become damp, and

<sup>1</sup> Needless to add, this is a question which requires considerable investigation before it can be adjudged in any sense as a general feature of urban sociology. It is clear, for example, that comparisons should more properly be made between genuinely "residential" areas. Some districts of the modern city cater almost entirely for the transient type of inhabitant in terms of furnished rooms and apartments. (cf. H. W. Zorbaugh, *op. cit.*, "The World of Furnished Rooms", where he describes how the whole population in a certain district of Chicago turns over every four months.)

flooding of cellars owing to the proximity of the river is not unknown. But it is far enough away from factory chimneys and near enough to the Bay to receive a reasonable amount of fresh air and winds from the sea. Drab as they are, the streets within the district are all fairly spacious. Most of them measure about twenty paces from kerb to kerb, and a large number of the houses, though not detached, are separated from the backs of others by small back yards, while some, in the Square itself, have a small back garden. As already mentioned, the Loudoun Square houses are now inclining to shabbiness, but they are solidly built, with fairly large rooms, comprising a basement or cellars, ground floor and hall, and two upper storeys. Even to-day, seen across the small play-park in the half-light, they are not without a certain dignity of appearance, with the setting sun turning to orange their yellow plaster and decayed Victorian facades. Most of the other streets contain rather smaller, two-storey houses which are generally built of brick, mortar and plaster. It need hardly be added that although many of these dwellings, particularly those in the Square, are now being used as apartment houses, they were never designed or intended for such a purpose. Water closets, for example, are usually in a shed at the back of the house, generally in the yard, and there is a general absence of bathrooms and a severe limitation of space as well as of washing and cooking facilities.

Several back alleys run parallel with Bute Street, dividing the backs of its houses from those in the Square and Christina Street. In the old days these alleys appear to have provided stabling for the horses and carriages of the Loudoun Square gentry, but to-day the sheds are used mainly for storage purposes, and the alleyways themselves serve largely as a dumping-ground for refuse and a certain amount of garbage. Whether or not a lack of Corporation service is the reason for this is unknown.

Gas is laid on in most of the houses, and in many cases electricity is also available. Cooking is done on an open grate and even in the living-room, or in a small kitchen when one is available. A narrow hall or passageway is a common feature; this often leads directly from the front door, whence it is possible to see partly into the living room at the back of the house, past the "best room" in the front, which contains the more cherished furnishings much in the same way as a farm-house "front room"

Inside the living room there are usually a couch or sofa of rather torn leather, a table and other oddments which tend to overcrowd the limited space, and a few chairs. The windows are small and limited in number, and in consequence little light enters. The cramped and overheated atmosphere of the room is often increased by the coal fire which it is necessary to keep going for cooking purposes as well as for warmth even in the summer months. On the walls and in open cupboards there usually hang various pieces of ornamental china and crockery. Ornamentation is often profuse, and frequently takes the form of patriotic emblems, flags, etc., with a number of photographs, invariably of coloured people, often in Army uniform. Matting or carpeting tends to be meagre. The general cleanliness of the living-room varies with individual households, irrespective of the presence of children. In not a few cases a general appearance of tidiness and cleanliness is created even when the apartment is a converted cellar or basement and is correspondingly lacking in vertical as well as horizontal space. There is a certain amount of washing of pavements outside the front door.

## 5. OTHER AMENITIES

The shops in the district, exclusive of Bute Street, are all of the general-stores type, apart from one or two butchers. They are generally one-man or family businesses, kept for the most part by Arabs or Maltese. They sell chiefly foodstuffs, general groceries, etc., and stock a wide variety of odds and ends, from bootlaces to toothpaste. There are about six public houses inside the area with beer, wine and spirit licences. All, owing no doubt to the prerogative of the brewers, have white licensees.

Besides those in Bute Street, boarding houses are to be found in several streets, mostly at the north end of the district. They cater mainly for Arabs and Somalis, whose presence provides another sub-congregation of the population. Near by is the Moslem mosque in Sophia Street. This is an ordinary house whose rooms have been converted for religious purposes. The front portion is used for prayer; behind is a cleansing room containing wash bowls and shower baths. Here clothes are changed and footwear removed, and a number of pads for the feet lead



directly into the prayer room so that devotees will not collect dirt on the way. Another room, constructed rather like a "pen", serves as a school, where the young Moslem boys are given instruction in the Koran, repeating its verses after their Somali teacher. On feasts and other notable dates in the Mohammedan calendar the green crescent flag of Islam is flown outside this establishment from a flagstaff.

Apart from the two or three Church buildings there are few other social amenities. The Methodist church has fairly large premises, which contain a number of miniature billiard tables, and a ping-pong outfit. These are used by members of the Church's young men and boys' clubs on most autumn and winter evenings, and by a Men's Club for discussion meetings once a week. There is no general community or public hall, and if any non-Church society wishes to hold a gathering of any size it is obliged either to apply to one of the churches for permission to use its hall, or to hire a class room in the South Church Street school for the purpose. If any members of the community wish to visit a cinema, hold a dance or play a game of football or cricket, they must go outside the area to do so. This means, in effect, that the main opportunities for local and social gatherings are outside in the streets or in the public houses of the area.

For the children the possibilities are slightly more extensive. As already mentioned, there is a small play-park in Loudoun Square, and adjacent to the Square in summer and autumn months a "Fair", consisting of a steam-driven merry-go-round and an "electric car" arena, and a few swings. These are patronized by a few of the older children and adolescents, but, besides being an expensive form of entertainment, they do little but create a great deal of noise and a certain passing excitement. The older adolescents, as we shall see later, appear to seek most of their entertainment outside the area; and, in the winter months in particular, it is obvious that a game of billiards in the church hall cannot compete with the comfort of a well-equipped cinema and the 'excitements which the "silver screen", even at second hand, is able to offer.<sup>1</sup>

There are three Welfare clinics near the dock area, but none within the Bute town portion. About the time of the present

<sup>1</sup> The recent construction of a Colonial Hostel has no doubt alleviated some of the difficulties mentioned above. (See p. 140 n. 1.)

enquiry a school feeding centre was opened at South Church Street School where meals were provided, as in other districts, for the children of mothers engaged on war work.<sup>1</sup>

## HEALTH AND PHYSIQUE

### 6. INFANT MORTALITY AND TUBERCULOSIS

The Cardiff Medical Officer of Health classifies his statistics by the municipal wards of the city, and it is impossible, therefore, to discuss the question of the health and hygiene of the community with exactness. As, however, the coloured people form a substantial proportion of the population of Adamsdown and South Wards and share very largely their social and economic background, a fairly reasonable set of inferences can be made. The most obvious features are that infant mortality and tuberculosis take their largest toll amongst the dockland population of the city. Examining the Cardiff wards over the period 1923-34, for example, we find that deaths under 1 year averaged 97 for every 1,000 persons in Adamsdown; 94 in South, and 96 in Central, giving an approximate average for these three wards of 96 deaths for every 1,000 of the population. These figures should be compared with the average of 71 for the remaining ten wards of the city, and the fact that the Cardiff rate of 74 compares unfavourably with the rate of 55.7 for England and Wales as a whole over the same period may be attributed largely to the particularly high incidence in dockland and the centre of the city. It is all the more significant, therefore, that although the city's rate fell steadily and considerably in the years immediately following—to an average of only 52 per thousand in 1938—and that this general fall was accompanied by a drop in the South and Central figures, the Adamsdown rate did not fall below 77.

In the case of tuberculosis, the incidence in dockland was proportionately even greater. Over the same period of twelve years, the average death rate per 1,000 of the population from

<sup>1</sup> Though none exists to-day, there was an infant welfare and play centre a few years ago at South Church Street School, where organized games and story-telling, drawing in colour and crayon, colouring pictures, raffia work and woodwork, wool embroidery and other forms of handiwork were carried on.

this disease (all forms) in the various Cardiff wards was headed very clearly by Adamsdown with a rate of 3.49, followed by Central with 1.77 and South with 1.64, the other wards approximating fairly closely to the two latter. This particularly high incidence in dockland, and by inference also amongst the coloured population, is attributed by Dr. Wilson, the City Medical Officer of Health, mainly to occupational factors. Although tuberculosis in all its forms affects all classes of the Cardiff population, there is no industry in the city other than seafaring which specially predisposes to it. It was found, for instance, in a sample of 563 cases that 18 per cent. were seamen.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Wilson's explanation for this large occupational proportion is interesting:

It is argued by analogy with experience ashore a high occupational incidence and mortality from T.B. amongst seafarers is favoured by unhygienic conditions of crews' spaces. It may be contended that similar conditions affect seamen in their own houses to an even greater degree, but this is not true of Cardiff, which, for a city of its size, has exceptionally few slums (even in the docks area) and which, though overcrowded, is not more so than many inland cities that have far lower T.B. rates.

And he goes on vigorously to attack the "slum" conditions prevailing in British ships, whose general amenities and cleanliness he compares very unfavourably with those of foreign-owned vessels in which "the dominant note was one of comfort and cleanliness due to the care and imagination in planning and furnishing". In contrast, the best that could be said of the crews' quarters in British ships, even those recently launched, was that they amply conformed with the regulations laid down by the Merchant Shipping Act.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> cf. J. Greenwood Wilson, "Slum Clearance at Sea", *The Lancet*, Sept., 1936

Although the Cardiff rate was higher than that for England and Wales, it did not compare unfavourably in this respect with other seaport cities of the kingdom. The *Ministry of Labour Gazette* (1932) quotes a report of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine to the effect that in comparison with other callings "apart from drowning and injury, service in the Merchant Marine is no more inimical to life and health than are many of the occupations ashore frequently regarded as unhealthful". The incompatibility of this conclusion with the point made by Dr. Wilson possibly arises out of a statistical misapplication in the former case. Many tuberculosis fatalities do not occur, or the disease is not noticed, until some time after the men concerned have retired from the sea or are working in other occupations.

<sup>2</sup> The relatively unhygienic condition of the British-owned ship seems to be borne out at Cardiff by the Medical Officer's classification of "nuisances" discovered in ships visiting the port in 1940. Out of 803 British ships inspected there were 96 defects of construction, 923 structural defects through wear and tear, and 983 dirty, verminous and other conditions prejudicial to health, making a total number of defects and nuisances of 2,002. Out of 442 ships of other nations, there were 161 defects of construction, 338 structural defects through wear and tear, and 223 dirty,

The high tuberculosis and infantile mortality rates in Adamsdown Ward are no doubt answerable for the fact that in 1938 this part of the city with 15.8 deaths per thousand showed the highest death rate of any ward,<sup>1</sup> comparing very unfavourably with the lowest rate of 8.8 in the suburban area of Ely, and hardly less so with that of Splott, another working-class district—10.7 per thousand. In regard to birth rate, however, Adamsdown was third highest with 18.9 births per thousand members of the community, being exceeded only by South (20.0), and Ely (23.5).

## 7. OVERCROWDING AND HYGIENE

Even though the maritime origin of tuberculosis is no doubt most likely to account for the majority of cases in this instance, it seems just as evident that overcrowding ashore has as much to do with its perpetuation as any other collection of factors. In this respect also, it is possible that overcrowding by multiple tenancy rather than the quality of the Cardiff houses themselves is mostly to blame. The city as a whole has for some time suffered from an acute shortage of housing accommodation, and although a number of new housing estates have been built on its outskirts at Ely and Mynachdy, the fact that most of the ground rents in the urban area are privately owned has prevented any adequate expansion of the cheaper type of dwelling-house that is required. Consequently, although during the years 1935–1938 the extent of overcrowding was reduced from 1,272 families to 424, there still remained in the latter year over 3,000 persons living in over-

verminous and other conditions prejudicial to health, making a total of 722. In short, defects and nuisances in British ships were approximately one and a half times more plentiful than in foreign ships (cf. *Annual Report of the Public Health Department, 1940*). Dr. W. Frazer, writing of conditions at Liverpool, points out that "inspection of the crews' quarters was noteworthy only by the fact that the quarters so closely resembled those provided for the crews in British ships 20 or 30 years ago." (cf. *Ann. Rep. to Liverpool Port. San. Auth. (1935).*)

On the other hand R. H. Thornton (*op. cit.*) has the following observation—"I believe that most port medical inspectors would agree that, if two new ships of identical amenity and space were occupied, one by an average British, and the other by a Norwegian or Swedish crew, the latter would contrive to create and retain an atmosphere of modest and homely comfort, while the former might well degenerate into an unattractive squalor. . . . 'Slum' after all is a relative term, designed to express disgust at living conditions which another age would have called luxury" (p. 225).

<sup>1</sup> The death rate for the whole city was 12.6.

crowded dwellings. As already indicated, the majority of extra housing was required in the working-class districts, viz:

Central	.	.	25 houses	(23)
South	.	.	39 "	(27)
Adamsdown	.	.	39 "	(26)
Splott	.	.	49 "	(23)
Grange	.	.	47 "	(32)

Relating the number of houses required in each of these wards to their respective populations, as is done by the indices in brackets, it will be seen that the needs were proportionately greatest in the case of Grangetown, lying on the west side of the dock area, and in the two main dockland wards. It is difficult to say how this situation specifically affects the coloured population, but there is no doubt that in their case the factor of multiple tenancy, whereby the single set of amenities in a house, such as lavatories, landings, stoves, etc., are used in common by the several families inhabiting the same house, is of major importance in bringing about conditions of overcrowding.

Some indication of the extent of sub-letting was gained on the basis of the *Register of Electors* for 1938, using the same streets as before (see p. 90) as a "control". Of some 380 houses it appeared that about 42 per cent. were sub-let and occupied by more than one tenant, 27 of these houses being occupied by three or more tenants or sub-tenants. Taking a similar number of streets and houses in the north end of the same Ward and north of the "colour line", i.e. on the city side of the Great Western Railway bridge, it was estimated in the same way that the proportion of houses occupied and sub-let to more than one family was 33 per cent., and that 12 houses were occupied or sub-let to 3 or more sub-tenants. Needless to say, however, this cannot be taken as a direct comparison between the coloured district and a non-coloured area, in view of the difference in size and type of house. A further rough estimate was made by taking a number of streets in the Loudoun Square area which contain the larger type of house, and using the Electoral List for the same year (1938) when, incidentally, the population of the area seems to have been relatively small. The results were as follows: In Christina Street with 51 occupied houses there were—

6 or more adults in each of five houses,  
5 adults in each of ten houses,

2 married couples in each of sixteen houses,  
3 married couples in each of three houses.

Whilst in Loudoun Square itself there were—

6 adults in each of three houses,  
5 adults in each of nine houses,  
2 married couples in each of fourteen houses,  
3 married couples in one house.

Using the same means of estimation and taking the district as a whole, the actual house-occupation rate worked out at 2.88 adults per house (married persons 2, "non-attached" persons 0.88). Of 49 known families, the average size of family worked out at 5.6 persons, and so if we include with the above figure 2.5 children under 21 for each married couple, this would give an approximate total occupation rate of some 5.5 persons.<sup>1</sup> As already indicated, owing to the absence of Alien Returns and other omissions, this figure must definitely be regarded in one sense as an underestimate. On the other hand, on the question of excessive limitation of living space,<sup>2</sup> which in the light of the above data, appears to apply specifically rather than generally, it should be remembered that a fair proportion of the males may be expected to be absent at sea at any one time. Such empirical enquiry as the writer was able to make did a little to clarify the subject. Data collected from 13 households regarding their accommodation showed a total of 78 rooms—including 44 bedrooms—occupied apparently by some 87 individuals, of whom 45 were returned as children under 14 (see Table attached). Even allowing for the inadvertent inclusion of a number of non-living rooms, such as kitchens and sculleries, and the omission of lodgers from the returns, this still argues for a relatively generous allotment of space.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The average size of family on the basis of 49 known families was as follows (number of families known in each case in brackets):

Negroid father or head of household	(16)	6.1
White father or head of household	(19)	5.26
Non-European (including Negroid) father or head of household	(30)	5.83

<sup>2</sup> Miss Nancie Sharpe (unpublished MSS) estimated in 1932 that 29 out of 47 Cardiff coloured families were living in overcrowded conditions.

<sup>3</sup> This point seems to receive a more general endorsement from the 1931 Census of the Adamsdown ward as a whole, which shows 0.98 persons to a room (the computation of rooms is on the basis of the usual living rooms, including bedrooms and kitchens, but excluding sculleries, lobbies, closets, bathrooms, etc.). This is the same average figure as shown by the Administrative County of London, with some 4.5 million inhabitants, for the same Census year, and is actually much smaller than that in most London working-class districts. The Adamsdown figures were exceeded only by South, the other main dockland ward, and Splott, another working-class area, with 1.01 persons to a room.

## NATURE OF HOUSEHOLD OF THIRTEEN COLOURED FAMILIES

Household No.	Occupation of Head of House	Age of Head	Age of Wife	Number of Children under 14	Children 14-18	Dependents over 18	No. of Bedrooms	No. of other Rooms	Bathroom	Total No. of Occupants of House
1.	Ship's cook	43	31	5	—	—	3	3	1	7
2.	Seafarer.	36	36	5	1	—	3	—	—	8
3.	Civil defence.	50	33	3	1	—	3	2	—	6
4.	Widow	—	40	1	—	—	3	2	—	2
5.	Seafarer.	45	35	5	—	—	3	3	—	7
6.	Widow	—	41	7	1	1	7	4	—	12
7.	Seafarer.	50	43	—	4	2	3	3	—	8
8.	Seafarer.	58	49	6	2	—	4	4	—	10
9.	Widow	—	38	2	2	—	3	2	—	5
10.	Contractor	60	50	1	1	—	3	3	—	4
11.	Boilerman	?	?	4	2	—	3	3	—	8
12.	Donkeyman	?	?	2	—	—	4	3	—	4
13.	Labourer	48	33	4	—	—	2	2	—	6

Total number of Rooms (inclusive of "other rooms") 78

It is probable, therefore, that the actual housing of the population is only one of the factors underlying the high mortality rate of dockland. Improvements not only in housing, but in personal and domestic cleanliness, increased sanitation, public cleansing,<sup>1</sup> disposal of refuse, storage and preparation of food, and relative freedom from dust are all factors which might be expected to bring about a reduction in the rate. Their application waits not only on a revival in the shipping industry, but on a considerable improvement in public services and on a fairly highly trained and literate population.

It is equally difficult to come to any definite conclusions as to the significance of the relative incidence of other and less serious diseases. In 1938 Adamsdown and South wards showed the smallest percentage of notified cases of scarlet fever, and were respectively third and fourth on the list in regard to diphtheria. It is difficult to say how far the former instance provides a true picture of the medical situation in view of possible non-notification. It is interesting that diphtheria—which as a more serious disease might be expected to come much more readily under medical notice—had a much higher incidence in the areas with which we are concerned.

## 8. PHYSIQUE OF THE CHILDREN AND ADULTS

In short, therefore, it is probably true to say that, save in the matter of tuberculosis,<sup>2</sup> the coloured population has in ordinary circumstances a standard of health not unlike that of the other sections of the city's population. Like other working class and poorer sections of the community it tends to show less resistance to infection and epidemic than the richer, better educated, better

<sup>1</sup> The writer can endorse this point from personal experience in one of the houses of nocturnal adventures with a continuous stream of several varieties of lice, which, as was apologetically explained, "just drop from the walls". The writer is unable to say whether this condition, which, needless to say, is not unique in the district, could be at least alleviated by periodic fumigation, or whether, as was suggested to him, the only way to cure it would be to pull down the houses.

<sup>2</sup> The question of venereal disease, which according to observers in Liverpool (cf. M. E. Fletcher, *op. cit.*) and Capt. Richardson (see p. 82), is extremely rife among these coloured seafaring populations, is another matter. Its incidence is likely to be greatest in the present case amongst persons coming from the Bute Street milieu, but unfortunately the writer has no figures at his command which would throw adequate light on this matter. Again, as with tuberculosis, the question of non-local origin has to be borne in mind in the sociological assessment of such statistics.



nourished, and better housed classes, and to suffer a greater loss amongst its infantile members. In all these matters the part played by malnutrition is as important as it is debatable. Since the relation of constitution to environment is not fully understood, the precise effect of inadequate feeding is often difficult to assess, even under clinical conditions, and in the present case nothing more was possible than a rather cursory examination in the course of studying the children anthropometrically. Though the samples compared were not large enough to yield significant results, a number of observations suggested that both white and "mixed" children showed up favourably in physique in respect of weight and height, as compared with other Cardiff working-class children whose measurements were taken in the course of a nutritional survey a few years ago.<sup>1</sup>

Carious dental conditions, which are often regarded as a rough guide to malnutrition, were fairly plentiful amongst the white and Arab children, but it would be dangerous to infer too much from this. Quite apart from a relative absence of the prophylactic measures usual in better-educated sections of society, the matter is complicated by what appears to be a racial advantage on the part of the Negro in respect of this biological feature.<sup>2</sup> At the time of the survey, at any rate, the children were certainly not lacking either in robustness or vitality, and it is probably safe to say that except in times of dire poverty their physical needs are not neglected; except, perhaps, in the matter of unsuitable and undiversified diet—one which, needless to say, is not peculiar to this community.

It was not found possible to make any similar anthropometric survey of the adults. From general observation, however, the men presented on the whole a rather more "healthy" appearance than the womenfolk, particularly the older ones. Many of the middle-aged as well as the older women have the pale and wrinkled faces commonly seen in the poorer districts of a modern city as well as, in some cases, the stunted appearance which is generally attributed to unfavourable conditions of environment. In some of these instances it is possible that these signs of "dilapidation"

<sup>1</sup> cf. K. L. Little, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> This suggestion that increased resistance to dental disease is inheritable through Negroid ancestry seems to be borne out by voluminous material from other parts of the world, and the present writer's unpublished data concerning a much larger sample than that discussed above are still further in agreement with it.

are partly the result of earlier experiences in professional prostitution, but the point should not be stressed too far, as untidiness of dress, slovenly gait, etc., all contribute to the same effect.

In view of their racial variety it is far more difficult to appraise the men, especially the Negroes, whose age a European is often inclined to assess as five or even ten years less than it actually is. The Somalis, too, on account of their tall and very slender build, are difficult to judge in respect of physique. But allowing for all this, there is no doubt that most of the men convey an impression of considerable robustness; and in view of their occupational experiences as firemen, stokers, etc., jobs demanding the maximum of physical strength and muscular effort, this is no more than might be expected.

## CHAPTER 6

### SOCIOLOGY—LIFE AND LABOUR

#### I. COLOUR PREJUDICE IN CARDIFF

Among the more important factors which condition and resolve the sociology of the coloured community there is little doubt that the attitude of the outside world in terms of colour prejudice is the most significant. The historical implications of this point will already be clear, particularly in bringing about the segregation of the coloured folk in the dock area. The matter can be put quite concretely. Were a coloured family to obtain housing accommodation, either as tenants or as lodgers, in a residential quarter of the town, their presence would cause a lowering of assessments in the district concerned, and hence a depreciation in the value of surrounding property.<sup>1</sup> This point was put quite plainly to the writer in conversation with various Corporation officials, and it appears to be no less evident in

<sup>1</sup> cf. *Western Mail*, 1919: "Mr. C. W. Melhuish complained at the meeting of the Cardiff Health Committee on Wednesday that respectable houses in the Riverside district were occupied by coloured people. This constituted a menace to the peace at times of rioting, and the white people were afraid of what might occur. He considered it too bad and he blamed the landlords and house agents for letting the property to coloured people. They ought to be ashamed of themselves."

other cities, such as Liverpool, and in parts of London. It denotes the existence of certain social attitudes which, from the point of view of a house-agent or property owner, are as real a factor and as much a danger to be guarded against as the possible incursion of shops or industry into a "desirable" neighbourhood.<sup>1</sup>

Other forms of "resistance" in Cardiff are various, and include ostracism, oral or newspaper comment, refusal to serve, non-admission to dance halls, hotels, etc.<sup>2</sup> Here, as elsewhere in Great Britain, the main reason for avoiding personal contact with or physical approximation to a coloured man or woman is probably fear or losing social status, but there are other reasons also. In the course of the present investigation, an attempt was made to obtain a more quantitative estimate of the position by means of a short census of hotels and boarding houses. Eleven such establishments were visited, and after enquiring terms, etc., in the role of a possible client, the writer asked the receptionist or proprietor if he would accommodate a number of his coloured student friends. Three affirmative replies, all from larger hotels, were received, and of these one stipulated that the coloured guests should be of "good class". The other seven answered in the negative with a varying degree of emphasis, and one was doubtful. On being pressed for her reason for objection, the keeper of a commercial hotel said: "We are only a small place catering for commercials—in a larger place it may be all right". The reception clerk at a larger hotel said that her instructions in this respect came from the management, and she attributed it to what she termed the "snobbish attitude" of the English. The proprietors of a number of small boarding-houses were more communicative and sympathetic. They stressed the fact that they had no personal objection to coloured people, but that their boarders would protest, and they had to think of their business.

These replies would appear to imply a strong prejudice on the part of the average white person against coming into close

<sup>1</sup> cf. Harold A. Moody, *Christianity and Race Relation*, p. 7 (pub. Fellowship of Reconciliation, 1943). It has recently been reported in the Press that a company owning a large number of London flats has a special clause in its leases excluding coloured people.

Some years ago a request was passed round a fairly fashionable London square to keep out coloured people in order to prevent its reputation from falling.

<sup>2</sup> To a certain extent this situation has been aggravated by the occasional incursions of a few rowdy individuals from the coloured quarter.

physical or social proximity with a coloured person, even, apparently, one of the "better" social class suggested by the word "student". There is little reason to suppose that the situation in Cardiff, or Liverpool, or other ports where coloured people reside differs from that in English society as a whole. The writer's more extensive inquiry<sup>1</sup> makes it likely that similar aversions affect up to at least 60 per cent. of the English middle class, and appear to involve much the same type of prejudice. What colour prejudice exists in Cardiff, then, is a reflection of current attitudes in our social heritage. The main difference between Cardiff and, say, a non-seaport city is due not so much to the absence of colour-bar patterns in the latter as to that of any sizable and "poor class" coloured population. Moreover, in the case of Cardiff, two further considerations must be borne in mind. A coloured seaman there is a person of low social status merely by virtue of his occupation, and this in itself implies some degree of ordinary class differentiation apart from any question of colour. The other point is that for the average white person in Cardiff, "Tiger Bay", Bute Street, with its openly acknowledged reputation of unsavouriness, and Loudoun Square itself are all one and the same place, with identical characteristics.<sup>2</sup> The last chapter showed that the coloured quarter has received much unfavourable publicity in the past, and taking the history of the dock area as a whole, there is nothing surprising in the fact that its associations should linger in the popular mind as something exciting and at the same time rather disreputable.<sup>3</sup> Even members of the Cardiff white population who go down to work in the area every day have very little understanding of the life and character of its

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, "An Aspect of the Colour Bar in English Society".

<sup>2</sup> At one time, scuffles and knife and brick fights around the dock area were not uncommon. More specifically, however, as already indicated, the opprobrium should be attached to Bute Street. The "doping" activities described in the last chapter are by no means a thing of the past. Nor is it difficult to see how the confusion of Bute Street with Loudoun Square should have arisen. Addressing the jury during the trial of a recent murder committed in the district, Mr. Justice Charles said at Swansea Assizes:

"The state of affairs in the Bute-street quarter of Cardiff is lamentable. This quarter, assize after assize, supplies the criminal court with these dreadful crimes. Someone committed this appalling crime; there is no doubt about that. I think it is a disgrace to that great city, and I only wish that some steps could be taken to ameliorate such a state of affairs." (Quoted from daily press.)

<sup>3</sup> "Most Cardiff citizens think of the Docks as Bute Street, and of Bute Street as an exciting cosmopolitan place, not quite nice to be in at night. The Docks area is certainly not nice to be in at any time. . . ." *Make Cardiff a Capital City*, Communist Party publication, 1938.

inhabitants,<sup>1</sup> and it is inevitable that for others, who lack even this slight degree of contact, the coloured men they meet in the streets uptown should be seen as stereotypes of even greater undesirability than they would be in a non-seaport town.

But however vividly Bute Street, with its long line of cafés and haunts of ill repute, may be associated with Loudoun Square in the general imagination of Cardiff, there is no doubt how strenuously the inhabitants of the Square disavow any such social or communal connection. The coloured residents complain often and bitterly of the bad name the district receives in consequence of the "undesirable" Bute Street influx, pointing to the periodic disturbances which result from dice-playing as an example of this. The obvious inference from their comments is that Loudoun Square people when left to themselves are law-abiding citizens, ordinary peace-loving and respectable members of society.<sup>2</sup> The suggestion is by no means an unreasonable one. Granting that an influx from Bute Street into the streets around, welcome or unwelcome, is inevitable, it does not follow that the movement is reciprocal. Indeed, so far as the writer's own observations went, it seems true to say that, with the exception of two or three of the more "respectable" public houses, the greater part of the coloured community definitely eschew Bute Street as a place of entertainment. Despite popular notions on the subject, there is a strong vein of propriety in Loudoun Square. The fact that the area is a working-class one by no means indicates that it lacks the social factors operative in the rest of our society, and for this reason alone the mere proximity and reputation of Bute Street are enough to prohibit it to all who wish to improve or even to keep their social status.

<sup>1</sup> A resident of one of the Cardiff suburbs, who worked during the day-time in the dock-area, and with whom the writer came in contact in the course of his anthropometric study, expressed great surprise on hearing that he was usually about in the coloured district at night time. "Is it quite safe?" he inquired, and went on to describe several gruesome experiences he had heard of.

<sup>2</sup> Some of the more conservative members of the community deplore especially the way the neighbourhood has "gone down" in more recent years, and quote as an example the more obvious manifestations of commercialized vice in the shape of the "cafés". Their objection appears to be largely to the unwonted publicity of these establishments. In the old days the trade was carried on quietly and decently behind the scenes, the ladies concerned receiving clients in their private houses in the neighbouring streets.

## 2. SOCIAL GROUPINGS

In view of the very great variety of racial as well as national elements in this population (more than 50 nationalities are said to be represented in the dockland area), it is obvious that any analysis of it in terms of social groupings must be made with the greatest caution and not a little generalization. An added difficulty is in saying how far the community can be assessed on the basis of the English social system. Many of its members aspire to be, and reasonably might be, classified in terms of that system. Others, most of the Moslems for example, maintain an almost separate society of their own and their inclusion in the English class system would not be justified. Perhaps it is most satisfactory, at least for the present, to regard the community as a discrete entity, and to classify its members according to their general social or political "interests". Following this fairly straightforward though somewhat arbitrary procedure, we may distinguish the following main segments, the first three of which may properly be looked upon as socio-ethnic.

(a) *The Afro—West-Indian*. This group contains the West Indian and West African elements—several hundred men, most of them married, and a large proportion resident in the district at least since the end of the First World war.<sup>1</sup> The group is therefore probably above middle age on the whole. Racially speaking it includes by far the darkest skins in the community. Most of the Africans hail officially<sup>2</sup> from Sierra Leone, Freetown in particular; others are from Nigeria, the Gold Coast, the Gambia, etc., with a few from the French colonial possessions, and rather more from the Portuguese Cape Verde islands. Among the "tribes" represented are Temne, Mende, Kru, Wolof, Fante, Akim, Yoruba, Efik, etc. A large number of the West Indians come from Barbados and Trinidad, but Jamaica, as well as the smaller islands such as Montserrat and St. Lucia, is well represented, and in addition there are men from the mainland, British Guiana, and a small number of American Negroes.

<sup>1</sup> It is amongst this group that the memory of the early experiences of the coloured settlement is most vivid.

<sup>2</sup> The adverb is necessary since, according to some reports in the community, a number of these men are actually from the hinterland of Liberia, but, wishing to be regarded as British subjects, they give the Colony as their birthplace.

The group as a whole is extremely "colour-conscious", and very zealous for the good name of their homeland and of people of African origin; a sentiment which many of them try to combine with various social pretensions. Its members frequently speak in brotherly terms of the "coloured peoples", but there is a tendency to restrict the term to those of Negroid affinities rather than to apply it to coloured races in general. There is a strong degree of masculinity and even austerity in the attitudes of many of the men. Their interests are to a certain extent political, but are apparently of a nationalist as well as socialist nature, and find expression in the form of an official organization known as the Sons of Africa, which came into being some five years ago. The purposes of this association are primarily social and cultural. Despite its name, membership is open to all, and includes a fairly large number of the womenfolk, some of the older "half-castes", and a few other males of non-African origin.<sup>1</sup> The Association cannot afford to rent rooms of its own,<sup>2</sup> and depends for extraordinary meetings on the generosity of individual members. It holds general meetings in hired buildings and other places of assembly in the district, when matters of special interest to the community come up for discussion, and aims at providing thereby a public forum. At other times its affairs are carried on by an executive committee which meets on Saturday afternoons in the house of the Treasurer, and looks after general business, including the collection of the subscription. This is one penny per member per week, and is used among other things to provide aid in sickness or distress, and as a burial fund. Every member who falls sick and goes to hospital<sup>3</sup> receives a payment of 2/- per week. At funerals a number of carriages are provided by the Association, and this, as it was pointed out, constitutes a particularly good advertisement. Further mutual aid is possible owing to the fact that several members of the body are donkeymen. A donkeyman plays a large part in selecting the crew, and it appears that fairly full advantage is taken of this industrial privilege by the members. Finally,

<sup>1</sup> The present membership is said to be some 400, of whom about 300 are Africans.

<sup>2</sup> The fact that the Association has no premises of its own gives rise to its considerable chagrin. One member pointed out that its name is known as far away as America. When an American Negro comes to Cardiff he naturally asks for the buildings of the Sons of Africa and is surprised and disappointed to discover that there are none.

<sup>3</sup> It was pointed out that reception in hospital obviated any question of malingering on the part of the beneficiary.

the Association tries to keep a general eye on the political interests of the coloured community. Some time ago, when the B.B.C. was planning a broadcast on the activities of the coloured folk, the Association intervened successfully in regard to one or two points in the programme which it considered prejudicial to the community's good name.

In short, the Sons of Africa claims to bring about a greater degree of collaboration—its slogan is “unity”. Its leaders are among the most respected members of the community, and it is looked upon as a highly respectable organization by coloured and white alike. Socially, perhaps, its most important function is as a status-assuring body. Its approved criteria—sober and informed discussion, a proper funeral, a “moral” code of behaviour—are also goals of the lower middle classes as such, and are points usually approved by bourgeois society. Perhaps it is largely for this reason that from the point of view of the more politically-minded Colonial Defence League,<sup>1</sup> the purely social and cultural activities of the Sons of Africa are looked upon with some impatience as “unrealistic”.<sup>2</sup> “They bury a man when he is dead, and do nothing for him while he is alive.”

This Afro—West-Indian segment is very well established, and in general terms, mainly through the influence of the Sons of Africa, represents the more solid and accommodative part of the coloured community. It suffers, however, or appears to suffer, from a lack of educated leadership and of political experience.

(b) *The Moslems*. This segment also is largely male in content, and in age is probably slightly junior to the Afro—West-Indian one. The bulk of its members are Arabs, mainly from Aden, though there are also a fairly substantial number of Somalis from British Somaliland, Indians, Egyptians and Malays. Its total numbers are difficult to estimate; but if the women and children are included—for most of the former and not a few of the latter have also been “islamized”<sup>3</sup>—it probably amounts to something not far short of two thousand.<sup>4</sup> This segment is essentially

<sup>1</sup> See p. 113 below for the history of this body.

<sup>2</sup> Some significant changes in the relations of the two societies occurred during the investigator's contact with the community, i.e., during the course of a year.

<sup>3</sup> The extent of conversion varies, particularly as regards the observance of various prohibitions. Some of the young people, however, have learned to speak Arabic fairly well. Others seem to be attracted mainly by the novelty of wearing Arab dress.

<sup>4</sup> One estimate is—700 Arab males; 150 Somali males; 1,000 Moslem children. After the investigation began many of the men were lost at sea through U-boat action



religious and social rather than political in its interests, and is bound together by the strong ties of brotherhood inherent in the Islamic creed, despite some sectarianism in this respect.<sup>1</sup> These religious ties and obligations are responsible to a considerable degree for the fact that the Arabs, at any rate, make social contacts almost exclusively amongst themselves, and particularly for the practice of a large amount of mutual assistance in respect of material possessions. For example, if a needy Moslem arrives in the district, one or two of the wealthier members of the group will see that he is properly set up with clothes, etc. This "setting up" is not exactly an act of charity, as the recipient is expected to repay the obligation; and he usually does so when he returns to port from his next trip.<sup>2</sup> The Moslems used to possess their own mosque, but this was destroyed by a bomb during the raids on Cardiff. A Moslem school and a temporary mosque have been established in a suitable building in Sophia Street, and are carried on under the auspices of a resident sheikh and a small staff of assistants, and in the "school" instruction in the Koran is given to the Arab and other Moslem children of mixed blood. Members of the group carry out their religious devotions with great assiduity, and the building has appropriate facilities for cleansing and prayer. The front room is pleasantly decorated in the Arab Moslem colours of green and yellow. Prayers are inscribed on the walls, from which mats are also hung, and there is a good carpet on the floor. The children sit outside in a small "pen", under the care of the sheikh's secretary, a tall Somali. Apart from his duties as religious head,<sup>3</sup> the sheikh, who always wears Arab dress and is accompanied on his perambulations round the district by a small attendant, acts also as an unofficial banker for his "parishioners". Many hundreds of pounds are entrusted to his care without written bond by returning seamen, the only stipulation being that the money shall be handed back in cash when the depositor requires it. For this reason, the

<sup>1</sup> There is an Arab club, and a Somali club. When a general meeting of the Community as a whole is called, each club sends its own representatives. The Somalis are said to be particularly "independent", and do not seem to have affiliated completely with any other section.

<sup>2</sup> It will be recalled (p. 79) that most of the P.A.C. payments advanced to Arabs by the Cardiff authorities were subsequently repaid.

<sup>3</sup> According to one report, the origin of the present religious leader was as "apprentice" to a Moslem priest in Algiers who transferred his "power" on his death to the disciple.

sheikh has to keep a large amount of ready money always at hand—a practice which led to a financial disaster on the night the mosque was bombed.<sup>1</sup> The institutional side is maintained in appropriate Moslem fashion by almsgiving on the part of the members. Very many of this segment have married white wives, although there is also a small number of Somali married women.

There is a tendency to regard the Arab section as being of rather higher social status than the other "coloured" members of the community. There is little doubt that most of the Moslems themselves share this point of view, particularly in regard to the Negroes. On the other hand, it is possible that linguistic difficulties account to some extent for the aloofness. Apart from their prominent share in the commercial life of the community, the Arabs take a keen interest in certain social affairs, such as A.R.P. duties, and although comment in this respect is based on a small number of cases, their sense of social responsibility is possibly more marked than that of other sections. This may be accounted for by the fact that as boarding-house keepers their propensities for public work and organization have more scope.

(c) *The "Mixed Bloods"*.<sup>2</sup> This segment comprises mainly the coloured juveniles of both sexes of Anglo-Negroid origin, although other crosses are to be found mixing with it. In some senses, therefore, it is simply a younger age group. Its members mix freely with one another, and present on the surface almost a light-hearted attitude towards life, and a suggestion of irresponsibility, the degree of which is apt to be estimated differently by different observers. This point requires further diagnosis, and is dealt with under a separate heading. Social affiliations are cross-cut by a number of church and other clubs, but the group is also institutionalized to some extent through what is known as the "Coloured Youth Movement of Cardiff". The group as a whole is highly conscious of its "peculiar" social and

<sup>1</sup> A large number of Arabs were praying in the cellar of the mosque when the bomb hit it, but all had a "miraculous" escape. The safe containing the men's savings, however, was destroyed. It is reported that the loss was accepted with the greatest calm by men who subsequently returned to the district, and no rancour or suspicion attended this liquidation of their assets.

<sup>2</sup> The term "Half-Caste" is the name in general use by the outsider. It is as well to note, however, that it is rarely if ever used within the community, and is very unpopular among the young people concerned, who usually prefer to be referred to as "coloured".

racial position, and this point directly or indirectly provides its most obvious reactions, and even interests.

(d) *The "Politicians"*. This fairly large, though somewhat indeterminate, section includes representatives of most of the segments, which to some degree it cross-cuts, comprising some both of the "Mixed Bloods" and of the inhabitants of longest standing. It must therefore be defined in loose terms, but it finds institutional expression in the other most significant organization in the district, the Colonial Defence League. This body originated under the stress of the application of the Aliens Order and the Shipping Assistance Act, as described in chapter 4; its object is the protection of the interests and rights of the Colonial population, in a militant degree if necessary. Perhaps for this reason, its influence seems to have been more marked in times of adversity than in the present comparative security, when its activities command less serious attention and sympathy. It is difficult to say how far it may be regarded as an unofficial section of the Cardiff Communist Party, an organisation which also claims to have the interests of the coloured community closely at heart, and is supported by several members of the C.D.L. Its affiliation and activities in this respect seem to have earned the strong disapproval of the more conservative-minded members of the Sons of Africa, despite the fact that both parties claim to be striving for much the same principles and along the same non-racial lines. The "politicians" number amongst them some of the best "talkers", as well as the best educated and most racially bitter members of the community, and in consequence it is more than likely that the lack of mutual agreement, which is never far below the surface, arises more from a conflict of personalities than one of principles. This question is discussed more fully on a later page.

(e) *The Womenfolk*. This segment includes mainly the married women, white or coloured, whose interests are mainly domestic and social along the lines prescribed for their sex. It is difficult to say how many of the white women are of local, or even of Welsh origin. The Cardiff School Medical Officer, who attempted in 1922 to estimate the composition of the city's population, decided that not more than 22 per cent of Cardiff's mothers came from South Wales,<sup>1</sup> and this conclusion tallies with the consider-

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the School Medical Officer of Health, Cardiff, 1922.*

able influx of immigrants which in the latter part of the last century helped to swell the city to its present size. It is possible that even this low figure is too high for the composition of the community with which we are dealing.

This female segment, however, is extremely important, partly because the community of to-day has grown up around and because of it, and partly because it forms a connecting thread between all the other segments already described. Its establishment, too, must be regarded broadly in terms of the colour complex as a whole. It is reasonable, for example, to assume that many of the older married women residing in the Square and elsewhere in the district came from the Bute Street milieu as a direct result of the process of "café" recruitment. Quite a number of women who follow such a professional career remain in it until it has ceased to be lucrative, or until they contract disease, when, becoming notorious, they are sometimes obliged to quit it and look for other means of support. The coloured man, who has little, if any, opportunity of meeting a white woman of "better" class, is their obvious quarry, and he is often quite glad to oblige them. Moreover, particularly in the earlier days of the community, many coloured seamen strange to English customs and social standards arrived in the district. They had no means of sifting their social contacts or of assessing the characters and reputations of the women they fell in with; and they were often anxious to settle down and set up some kind of establishment which they could come back to and look upon as a home. Unpropitious as Bute Street would seem to be as a matrimonial agency, many of the contracts made in this way (not all of them legally effected) seem to have resulted in permanent and well-established households. In other cases, of course, the woman continues her attempt to make the best of both worlds, and carries on her old profession more or less sporadically by accommodating "visitors" in the house during her husband's absence, sometimes even, with his consent or connivance, when he is at home.

But it would be a mistake to assume that the origin of all the Loudoun Square womenfolk is of such "poor class". There are examples of girls coming straight from middle-class and respectable working-class families whose marriage to a coloured man has proved socially inauspicious from the point of view of

parents and friends, and who in consequence, partly for convenience, partly through social pressure, were obliged to move to the coloured quarter of the town. With the arrival of children their position in the district became consolidated more or less for good. Other white housewives have arrived here in a variety of ways. A few have left home either from a spirit of adventure, or because they found the ideas and customs of their original social group too restrictive, and have "taken up" with a coloured man and become established here, not always involuntarily.<sup>1</sup> Other women have borne an illegitimate child to a white father in another part of the country, or in the neighbourhood of Cardiff, and have come here to "hide their shame". Not infrequently such a woman makes a marriage of convenience with a coloured man, who gladly adopts the child.<sup>2</sup> The ramifications of their position are therefore manifold, but in general terms these women represent a group which has failed for one reason or another to adapt itself to "normal" society.

In short, the white womenfolk are in a way almost as heterogeneous an assemblage as their coloured consorts. Culturally they have more in common, but socially speaking their origin is hardly less diverse, and they have little beyond the common experience of the neighbourhood to bind them together. Like the men, they seem to form a number of cliques for various social purposes. One group, consisting mostly of the church-going Africans' wives, provides the membership of the Women's Institute at the local church, and meets for weekly talk and discussion under the leadership of the Methodist missionary's wife. Another group will usually be found sitting in the saloons of the local public houses. Others lead more isolated lives, and apart from an occasional doorstep gossip seem to mix very little with their fellows. One or two, from "better class" circles, are obviously very self-conscious about their social position, and appear deliberately to keep aloof.

<sup>1</sup> Some commentators are very insistent on the sexual implications. Individual police officials in particular, assert that many of these girls do not find equal satisfaction in the embraces of the white man. It is possible that cultural differences in the love-making of the Negro may be responsible for the girls in question being unwilling to consider any other partner. On the other hand, there is no reason why a psychological explanation in terms of compatibility of interests should not be equally plausible. The popular difficulty over this question arises mainly out of rationalization of what seems to the average white man an almost outrageous phenomenon.

<sup>2</sup> One instance was quoted of an Indian serving a long sentence for manslaughter who never failed to write and inquire after his adopted child.

(f) *Quasi-members*. These comprise a number of white families living in the district, of the same social class as the coloured members, and a further small group of more or less resident and official white persons and families such as the local clergy, school teachers, social workers, etc. Of these, the first-named, by reason of their social category and habitation here, share to some extent the same common body of experience as the coloured community as a whole, though their common sympathy is more doubtful.<sup>1</sup> The latter group has little beyond common residence to justify its inclusion, and on the whole, with perhaps one or two significant exceptions, is easily recognizable by the extent of the social as well as the racial distance which separates it from the rest of the inhabitants of the community-area. The "poor whites" necessarily make a certain amount of social contact with the coloured members in terms of shopping, A.R.P. duties, etc., and there are no barriers between the children; but among the more official white elements there is not a little tendency to hold aloof. This seems to be due as much to lack of understanding as to lack of sympathy. They are the only section which feels called upon to "explain" their neighbours, and the explanations offered vary considerably, ranging from the sentimental to the economic, and invoking at its most baffled the mysteries of human heredity. Conversely, the attitudes of the community proper leave no doubt that it recognizes this "symbiosis", and is in the main apathetic or suspicious, with, however, a number of notable exceptions where personal contacts have led either to quite friendly reciprocity or to scarcely veiled hostility. Such contacts fall mainly, but not exclusively, under the category of social work, men's clubs, boys' clubs, etc., where the possibilities of sociability are somewhat in line with the general pattern of the English social system; and in one or two less usual associations, such as air-raid wardens' posts, where on a minor scale, and with some dozen different nationalities involved, an interesting

<sup>1</sup> This was evident at the end of the First World war when several residents wrote letters to the newspapers complaining of the presence of the coloured people. *E.g.*: "A soldier returning to the district from the war cannot help regretting that houses all round him are tenanted by coloured people. Before the war his neighbours were his friends. What a shock it has been to these lads returning home to be married to find coloured there," *Western Mail*, 1919. Possibly, however, these comments were indicative merely of the last "resistance" of the neighbourhood, because some 17 years later at the time of the Richardson report (see pp. 81-3) several white residents wrote of their coloured neighbours in more favourable terms.

illustration of international and inter-racial co-operation is afforded.<sup>1</sup>

### 3. RELATIONS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

(a) *The Criteria of Status.* The significance and implications of colour have already been stressed when speaking of Loudoun Square's relations with the outside world. In examining the social attitudes and etiquette inside the community it is not surprising to find that the question of pigmentation occupies a great deal of attention. This, it will already be evident, is mainly because white values and social standards play a large part in the determination of the community's sociology. In this respect the processes of marital selection are as good an indication as any, and in the case of the girls these seem to be almost exclusively confined "endogamously" to persons of their own community and colour. It is plain from the random sample quoted on a previous page that quite a number of such unions have already taken place, and although marriage with a white man is not entirely ruled out, it is doubtful if any but the lightest-skinned girls are ever offered the opportunity.<sup>2</sup> The young men, however, have wider opportunities and choice, and it is fairly

<sup>1</sup> There were two Air Raid Wardens' Posts, one at the Anglican church and the other at the Wesleyan Methodist church at the other end of the district. The latter was manned, apparently very conscientiously and efficiently, by the Missioner as warden; sub-warden, a Maltese boarding-house keeper; and a number of West Indian, West African, Arab, Jewish, and coloured men and women as wardens and messengers. The A.R.P. duties in the district in general appear to have brought about quite a strong sense of comradeship and co-operation, and in this respect the Missioner's enthusiasm and bent for organization seem to have earned their reward. The investigator was present at an inaugural meeting of fire-watchers, where a graphic, and in terms of its purpose very effective description was given of the burning of Rotterdam by the Germans.

<sup>2</sup> One of the reasons advanced by the girls of mixed blood themselves is that they are unwilling to marry a white man, as they are afraid he may refer to them, or call them, by the term "dirty nigger". This, however, is probably no more than their method of compensating for the limited possibilities of marrying a white.

cf. also a letter in the *South Wales Echo and Express*, June, 1932:

"I am a young girl of Barry, but being half English would like to know why young men despise girls of my type, whereas one sees many half-caste men accompanying white girls" (note that the writer does not apply the term "half-caste" to herself). Another correspondent, however, disclaims the above aspersion:

"I am the son of a Jamaican father and an English mother, and I have three sisters. It is definitely wrong to say that the coloured girls in Cardiff are shunned by coloured men. All three of my sisters are married to coloured men, and I do not know of any three coloured girls in Cardiff of marriageable age who are not either married or courting coloured men."

evident that they deliberately seek out and marry, when they can, white girls in preference to girls of their own colour.<sup>1</sup> In fairly general terms, too, it is evident that within the community itself the degree of pigmentation of the skin is of as much importance as any other cause in affixing social status both in the case of the individual and of the various ethnic groups. The extent of such a bias is difficult to assess in view of the sectarian nature of the population, but certainly amongst the white section, and perhaps even more markedly amongst the "Mixed Bloods", there appears to exist a succinct belief that the Africans occupy the lowest social place—lower, for example, than the Arabs and the Malays. To be married to an Arab confers more social prestige than having a Negro husband.<sup>2</sup> This, however, is far from saying that the African or West Indian members are regarded as less worthy as personalities, for social factors have also to be taken into account, such as personal habits, abstinence from drink, degree of educational equipment, religious affiliations, etc. The apparent conflict of ideas arises culturally out of the as yet unanalysed belief in the disgrace of colour, present in the greater English society. Even, therefore, if the attachment of inferiority to the deeper-coloured person is not altogether a satisfactory description of this attitude, there is no doubt that it is an overriding consideration, and that deeper pigmentation is definitely "unfashionable" even in Loudoun Square. Though far from accepting the premises on which it is founded, the older Africans and West Indians take these notions more or less as a matter of course, and in so far as they accord social values, look upon the possession, and in particular, the display of (European) education and middle-class social etiquette as deserving of a considerable amount of

<sup>1</sup> Miss Nancie Sharpe (unpubl. MSS., 1932) offers the following data in respect to this question in Cardiff:

Children of coloured men who married	Husbands or wives who were:		
	White.	"Mixed".	Coloured.
Girls—"mixed"			
coloured	7	1	13
	—	—	1
Boys—"mixed"	9	1	—

<sup>2</sup> A white housewife was heard to remark that she had been obliged that morning to go up and see the schoolmaster because some of the children had called her son a nigger. "Everyone knows that his father was an Arab," she indignantly complained. It is possible to perceive a certain amount of condescension, also, in the manner of Arab shopkeepers towards their Negro customers.



emulation and approbation. The Arabs seem to be little troubled by the colour implications—no doubt because they are least affected by the influence of the outside world—and in this particular respect preserve the most truly neutral attitude of any group. On the other hand, both they and the much smaller Malay element are inclined to impugn the Negro more on cultural grounds, and on the whole, granting even the linguistic difficulties, the extent to which fraternization is carried on between the groups is very variable. There is no doubt that the cultural pride and solidarity of the Arabs is strong, as is also their pride in British nationality, but their general attitude towards the outside world is far more tolerant than accommodating in its implications.

(b) *Social etiquette.* In so complicated a context, it is but natural that there should be a number of clearly prescribed rules of etiquette for the purposes of cross-segment social intercourse. It is a very great insult, for example, except amongst friends and comrades, to use the term "Nigger",<sup>1</sup> or any similar colloquialism, such as "Sambo". Among friends, however, the term "Nig" is used in the younger set and is accepted as a jocular form of address. The term "half-caste" is generally eschewed, but is sometimes used by a coloured person to describe another to an outsider and is usually accepted without particular offence from the latter. All persons possessing a dark colour, or any African blood, prefer as a rule to be referred to simply as "coloured", and that is their usual description of themselves. Many of the West Africans and West Indians, however, like to be termed "Africans", or more formally "men of African origin", and amongst themselves they designate each other more specifically as "Gold Coastian", etc., though here again, somewhat as with the term "Nig", the phrase "black man" is also employed. The term "Negro" is less popular, and is disliked by some, mainly on account of its former implications of slavery. From the point of view of the white members of the community, Arabs

<sup>1</sup> In particular the term "dirty nigger" may be regarded as a *casus belli* or battle cry in racial conflict. cf. also R. R. Moton, *What the Negro Thinks* (publ. S. C. M.)—"It is . . . true that certain elements of the race bandy this term (Nigger) lightly back and forth among themselves; but this does not confute the fact that all Negroes everywhere resent being called 'nigger' by any white person under any circumstances, and even when the term is used in badgering among themselves it is intended to convey, good-naturedly, a certain contemptuous disregard for the other's estimate of himself. . . ."

and other light-skinned non-Europeans do not appear to come under the designation "coloured", and provided their race or nationality is known, are referred to simply as Arabs, etc. The term used by the African and other coloured males, including the younger generation, for a married woman or consort is "the Missus", or simply "Missus". The form used by one white woman to another is very often simply "Love", although "Auntie" seems sometimes to be in use in a classificatory sense for women of a rather older generation addressed by their juniors.

The Africans are by far the most ceremonious members of the community, and granting even the linguistic and cultural difficulties of estimating the Arabs, appear to be also the most cultured (using the word in its conventional sense). As we have said, many of them retain a great pride in their native institutions, which stands out in somewhat naive contrast to their desire to emulate English cultural traits. This same pride is accompanied on the one hand by a certain tinge of sentimental yearning for their homeland, and on the other by an apparently equivalent fear as to their reception there in terms of family welcome and personal prestige. Not a few of them left home very many years ago as young men against the wishes of their parents, sometimes because they were in trouble of some kind. Among many of the peoples of the Coast the seaman's occupation is thought appropriate only to a ne'er-do-well or to the fairly generally despised Kru, while among the anglicised classes it is accorded no higher status than in Britain. As one informant explained, there is an idea common in parts of West Africa and other Colonies that a man who comes to England is bound to make his fortune.<sup>1</sup> If on returning to his native town he was unable to take a house and live in the style and convention expected of his years, the family dignity would be considerably lowered: it might even jeopardize the marital prospects of his nephews.<sup>2</sup> The pride of these men in Africa and in themselves as Africans is tempered also with a certain degree of appreciation of the frailties of some of their group, mainly in terms of sexual

<sup>1</sup> This sentiment seems to involve much the same implications as the older countryman's view of London, Dublin or any other capital city—"the streets of London are paved with gold".

<sup>2</sup> While there is a great deal of self-pity and rationalization in these explanations, their general validity seems to be borne out by the attitude of many West African students, who also show on occasions a similar diffidence about returning home without the requisite symbols of success, such as university degrees.

behaviour.<sup>1</sup> Amongst this section of the community the commonest form of salutation is the handshake, although an outsider will often be greeted by the raising of the hat. The Arabs greet each other more ritualistically, and the kiss is often exchanged. Except among the younger generation, the sexes are rather rarely seen together out of doors, unless when going to church, or on a trip out of the district. Even on their way out of church the males tend immediately to split off into groups of their own sex. Some of the public houses also segregate the women, or make an official restriction on the length of time that women may remain in the bar. Again, in the streets, which on fine afternoons and evenings are the main centres of social gathering and intercourse, the social groups are almost entirely confined to men, although the women are frequently to be seen conversing with the menfolk from their doorways or doorsteps. It seems fairly certain that the main reason for this obvious sexual differentiation is a matter of custom rather than of common sympathy between wives and husbands. The very presence of so many males around the place seems to indicate a strong pattern of masculinity, and this, coupled with the diverse cultural and occupationally conditioned outlook of the men, makes it exceedingly difficult to compare the situation here with any but a society of similar type.

#### 4. ECONOMICS

(a) *Occupations and Wages.* In the absence of complete data it must suffice here to indicate the general rather than the specific economic condition of the community. The paramount male occupation is, of course, seafaring, which covers, in order of numerical importance, firemen and trimmers, greasers, ordinary

<sup>1</sup> As much as for condoning or permitting moral laxities in the case of their wives. This in part explains why home visiting appears to be somewhat rare. One man will be very good friends with another in the street, but will not think of entering the other's home lest the latter's wife should think she can take liberties with him. This is not to say that he is a moralist, but he thinks the line should be drawn somewhere. He recognizes certain public attitudes as to the Negro's frailties, and is all the more anxious that the aspersions should not be proved true in his case. In the present community, the Gold Coast men seemed to be particularly self-conscious on this point, and showed the greatest degree of national consciousness and pride. The "pride" of the Gold Coastian, particularly the Ashanti, is well known amongst West Africans themselves, and the Gold Coastian himself likes the trait to be acknowledged.

seamen and donkeymen. From one random sample (taken on a Sunday afternoon) of men showing the M.N. (Merchant Navy) badge on their coat-lapel, it would appear that at least two-thirds of the adult population, perhaps even more, follow this calling. The remaining male occupations, with few exceptions, are also in some way connected with the sea. Moreover, as we have already seen, in "normal" times, owing partly to lack of training and aptitude for other occupations, and partly to colour prejudice, this is virtually the only form of employment open to the younger males. Other occupations are varied, and include manual work for the Corporation or for private contractors, and general navvying; dredger-work; semi-skilled mechanical work in a garage or driving a lorry; boarding-house keeping; shopkeeping; night-watching; and a number of less orthodox means of earning a living, such as "dealing", toutting, and unofficial bookmaking. The number of coloured males in clerical employment is insignificant.

The dominant female occupation is, of course, domestic work. Some of the younger women and girls work in houses outside the area, and some in households other than their own in the Loudoun Square quarter itself. Girls whose parents keep a boarding house usually look after the book-keeping and general clerical work which the regulations for such establishments demand. Further female occupations are almost without exception of the semi-skilled or unskilled variety, e.g. work in resin, jam, and rag factories, and during the war in ammunition factories; a few work in up-town cafés and supper-bars, and as cleaners in the more "respectable" Bute Street public houses.<sup>1</sup>

In the state of war-time activity which operated at the time of this investigation, most potential wage-earners in the community were fully employed, and with some alleviation of the colour bar it would be impossible to speak of the coloured folk as poverty-stricken, despite all the hardship, unemployment, etc., described in a previous chapter. With seafaring as the major occupation, the present wage scale for merchant seamen, given

<sup>1</sup> The fact that Cardiff is a distributive rather than a manufacturing centre means that although a fair number of casual, blind alley jobs, such as messenger and errand boy, are available, there is less chance of steady and progressive openings for all juveniles in the city, white as well as coloured. In the latter case, ostracism by female fellow workers, the apparent difficulty of coloured girls in settling down to a routine job, such as domestic service, and so on, all go to augment the economic difficulties of the matter.

below, provides some measure of the present situation in this respect:

	£	s.	d.	
Fireman . . . . .	11	2	6	per month.
Trimmer . . . . .	10	2	6	„ „
Ordinary Seaman . . . . .	7	7	6	„ „
Donkeyman . . . . .	12	2	6	„ „ <sup>1</sup>

To these wages must be added, of course, food on board ship, and also a number of war-time increments, viz. Seafarer's Risk Money, £10 per month, and a differential payment of £2 per month while on articles. In other words, a fireman's total remuneration, while on articles, would be some £23 per month gross. The usual practice is for married men and those with dependents to write out an Allotment Note before sailing, and the amount allotted is paid by the shipping company to the person described on the note. Before the Second World War, the usual amount allotted by a married man was £10 per month; in present circumstances allotments are in the neighbourhood of £15 per month. The usual mechanism of payment also includes the Advance Note issued at the time of signing on, and a lump payment at the end of the trip of whatever arrears have accumulated during it. The sum covered by the Advance Note is payable to any named relative, and usually serves to tide things over at home until the arrival of the allotment at the end of the first month. Thus, although it is possible to make a seaman's income regular by judicious arrangements, the method of payment does not encourage a habit of steady expenditure. It is easy to see how at the end of a long voyage a man coming ashore with a fair amount of money in his pocket may be tempted to give himself and everyone else a "good time", with the result that the money which in another occupation would go towards providing basic necessities, clothing, furniture, etc., is quickly spent on "luxury" goods, which really lie far beyond the scope of the seaman's income. The coloured seaman is as fond of sociability as anyone: if he has any children he likes to see them well and even expensively clad, and very often he delights in giving them sums of money. Moreover, not a few of the coloured men are less accustomed to the value of money than the ordinary white worker. They therefore find thrift more difficult, and the general result is to unbalance a budget which at the best of times is only

<sup>1</sup> National Maritime Board Scale, October, 1942.

precarious. Largely for these reasons, and because of the frequent absence of the male head at sea, the economic affairs of the household are managed mainly by the white housewife or consort. So far as the writer is aware no extensive study of the household budgeting of a seafaring community as such has been made, but it would probably produce some interesting results. It is even arguable that its computation on the basis of a different and higher minimum standard of needs than in other occupations is required on account of the peculiar psychological and industrial factors present.

(b) *Other Earnings*. The available shore jobs bring in rather less than the money at present to be earned at sea. One African reported that he was earning £4 10 0 per week as a lorry driver; a labourer was getting £3 16 0; a worker in Civil Defence £3 16 8d.; another on contract work £4 15 0; and a boilerman £5 10 0, and similar amounts were being earned in Corporation employment. An Arab shopkeeper stated that all his one hundred or so registered customers took all their rationed goods, while in addition he sold a large quantity of supplementary goods—greens, potatoes, and other vegetables, as well as sweet biscuits when available.

(c) *The Implications of Rent*. One of the most important and (in terms of the large-sized houses in the area) most essential sources of income is the boarding of lodgers and the sub-letting of rooms. Boarding costs are computed at about 25/- per week, for which a light breakfast, sandwiches for luncheon, and a larger meal in the evening are provided, in addition to a room. The practice of boarding ostensibly applies only in the case of lodgers who are not seamen, as seafarers must by law be accommodated in a house which has been officially registered for the purpose; at such houses similar rates are charged. Unfurnished rooms are also let for storage purposes at 4/- to 6/- per week.

There is no doubt that the rents of the houses in the area are inordinately high, and even taking into account the general house shortage in Cardiff and the high rents in other working-class districts, the Bute Town rents still compare very unfavourably. Another reason<sup>1</sup> for this is understood to be the high

<sup>1</sup> Most of the houses in the district are held on a leasehold basis, and after their term of 99 years, which is close to expiration, they revert to the ground landlord in good condition on valuation.

assessment on the Loudoun Square type of house, which means, in effect, that tenants pay rents (1942) which, including rates, range from 20/- to 30/- per week for a house of three to four bedrooms and two or three other rooms. In the adjacent streets such as Maria Street, where the houses are smaller, rents including rates vary from 18/- to 25/- per week. In most cases, electric light and gas are available, but other important amenities such as baths are generally absent,<sup>1</sup> and the contrast between the cost of this type of house and the newer Corporation parlour type, which has three bedrooms and is let in the suburbs at 13/7d. or 15/3d. per week according to distance from the city, is remarkable in terms of amenities as well as costs. So far as rentals are concerned, it is possible that the position of the coloured families of Cardiff is even more extreme than that discovered by a recent survey in Liverpool.<sup>2</sup> It was found there that the average coloured seaman was paying a higher rent than the corresponding average white family, and the suggestion was made that the rent charged to coloured families may be a not unimportant factor in their "depressed" condition of life. This point is of special interest in view of the segregative factors also at work in Cardiff. It is further interesting to note that the Cardiff rents are possibly even higher than those paid in the case of the Liverpool families, where the median rent for 7-roomed houses was 20/- per week, and for 8-roomed houses 32/- per week.

On the basis of a small sample of thirteen Cardiff households it appeared that rent and rates absorbed some 22 per cent. of their weekly income, and that the average rent paid was 19/5d. per week for six rooms. In the case of the Loudoun Square district, as, of course, in Liverpool also, sub-letting of part of the house is the usual method of meeting the difficulty of large houses and high rents,<sup>3</sup> and it is reported that the sub-letting of some of the

<sup>1</sup> Out of a random sample of 13 houses occupied by coloured families, only one had a bathroom.

<sup>2</sup> Univ. of Liverpool, Social Science Dept., *The Economic Status of Coloured Families in the Port of Liverpool*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>3</sup> This fragmentation of the one-time single family dwelling house into separate structural apartments provides an illuminating insight into the economic process whereby the poorer-class immigrants are able to "drive out" the better-class residents. cf. H. W. Zorbaugh, *op. cit.*, p. 147—"The story of this Negro invasion is the old story of the competition of standards of living. Willing to live in dwellings that even the Sicilian had abandoned, willing to pay higher rates than the Sicilian had paid, meeting these rents by overcrowding, the Negro has slowly but steadily pushed his way in among the Sicilians, who in turn have begun to move northward toward North Avenue, into the German slum."

Cardiff houses brings in as much as £150 per annum in rent to the owner or first tenant.

(d) *Family Budgets*. In the same short enquiry an attempt was made to obtain some idea of the family budget. A questionnaire (see Appendix, p. 163) asking for particulars of weekly earnings of members of the family and expenditure on rent, food, clothing, furniture, personal items, etc., was distributed amongst a number of families, selected as "suitable" by an African helper,<sup>1</sup> and 13 forms were eventually returned. It was explained to the heads of households and other members of the families in question that a weekly estimate of these particulars was required and their careful co-operation to this end was sought. The details supplied are recorded in Table A. One difficulty in treating and interpreting them arises from the casual and very complicated nature of employment in the merchant service as mentioned above. The rates of pay there quoted, of course, apply only whilst the seaman is actually at sea and on articles. Between voyages and under war-time conditions he is on the Reserve Pool of merchant seamen, and receives a different and lower rate of pay, which varies according to his job afloat. This means that it is virtually impossible to estimate the weekly income except in retrospect, and for this reason a number of the returns show earnings under hypothetical conditions as well as at the time the particulars were collected. Summarized and analysed, these particulars provide the following average figures per household:

	£	s.	d.
Income on present basis . . . . .	4	7	9
Income on optimum basis . . . . .	5	4	6
(e.g. when continuously employed on articles)			
Expenditure on Rent . . . . .	19	5	
Food . . . . .	2	14	3
Clothing . . . . .		5	9
Coal . . . . .		4	8½
Gas . . . . .		4	5½
Light . . . . .		1	7
Household and Personal Sundries	15	4	
Total . . . . .	£5	5	6

The items of expenditure were further analysed in terms of their

<sup>1</sup> The families selected all included children of school age. It was explained that the main reason for the enquiries was in order to obtain some quantitative estimate of the economic difficulties of sending a child on to a secondary school.



TABLE A. THE FAMILY BUDGETS OF 13 COLOURED FAMILIES  
(Amounts shown as shillings and decimal parts of a shilling)

Household No.	Income				Expenditure										TOTAL EXPENDITURE
	Father's Earnings	Mother's Earnings	Children's Earnings	TOTAL INCOME	Rent and Rates	Food	Clothing	Coal	Gas	Lighting	Household Sundries (incl. travel, cleaning, laundry, etc.)	Personal Sundries (incl. cinema, tobacco, pools)	Clubs		
1.	71.8	—	—	71.6	18.4	60	4	6.2	2.6	2	9	8.2	3		113.4
2.	71	—	21.3	92.3	12	38.1	8	4.6	7	1.6	4.6	6.3	6		91.2
3.	71.6	—	—	71.6	18	40	2	4.6	3	1.2	2.8	11.1	6.8		89.5
4.	—	29	—	29	17	18.5	?	3.9	7	5.9	7	10	2		71.3
5.	71	—	—	71	20	37	3	5.6	7	2.9	5.6	.3	2.9		84.3
6.	—	36	20	64*	30	50	?	2.8	4.6	—	7	?	1.4		95.8
7.	71	—	88	170†	14.2	117	6	5.9	4	2	15.6	2	8		174.7
8.	68	—	8	76	22.9	76	10	5.9	5	1	4	4.6	5		134.4
9.	—	30	45	82.5*	25	25	12	5.8	3	.2	4	2.6	3.2		80.1
10.	95	—	25	120	22.6	80	7	6.2	5	3.3	?	?	4		128.1
11.	110	—	—	110	20	68	11.2	2.6	7.6	.3	4.2	2	?		115.9
12.	71	29	—	100	17.6	60	1	3	4.6	1	?	8	3		98.2
13.	76	—	—	76	16	45	5	5.9	2.6	2	5.6	7.6	?		89.7

\* Includes payments from lodgers

† Includes Pension

percentage distribution and then compared with standard estimates drawn up by the Ministry of Labour. The following results were obtained:

	<i>Coloured Families</i>	<i>Ministry of Labour</i>
Food . . . . .	51.5%	50%
Rent . . . . .	18.5%	16%
Fuel and Light. . . . .	10.0%	18%
Clothing . . . . .	5.5%	12%
Miscellaneous . . . . .	14.5%	4%

Considering the methodological objections which can be raised against the latter data the discrepancies are not over-great. It is evident that the coloured families have underestimated their outlay on clothing, although here it is also possible that their expenditure on "Clubs" amounting to an average of 3/8d. per household (with two returns omitted) partly covers the matter, and is counter-balanced by the larger proportion on Miscellaneous items, inclusive of household and personal sundries. In any case, it would be as well to regard the comparison with the greatest caution, having in mind the small size of the sample concerned, the method by which it was selected, and the possibilities of bias as well as inadvertent inaccuracies in the estimates supplied.<sup>1</sup>

The same data were used for a rough and equally tentative estimate of the families concerned in terms of a hypothetical minimum standard of needs. Costs and allowances worked out by Miss Nancie Sharpe in the course of an economic investigation into the standard of living of the coloured folk in 1932<sup>2</sup> were

<sup>1</sup> One interesting omission from the returns is that of lodgers as a source of income. Only two forms record instances of this form of earning, although eight out of the thirteen households concerned contain six or more rooms. Having in view the stated object of the inquiry—to assess the economic ability of coloured parents to afford secondary schooling for their children—it is also very likely that a conscious or unconscious attempt was made in some instances, though not in all, to produce as strong a case as possible. The mother of one household whom the writer personally interviewed was inclined to view the suggestion of economic assistance in her case as a slight on her social status, and appeared anxious for that reason to make her position out to be more favourable than it really was.

<sup>2</sup> *op. cit.* Nancie Sharpe unpublished MSS. Miss Sharpe estimated at the time that only two out of eleven Cardiff families were likely to be always above the poverty line. The minimum standard of needs consisted of the weekly amount required, per person, to provide the bare minimum of food, light, cleaning materials, and clothes necessary to health, provided it is laid out to the best advantage. It allows for no saving for emergencies of any description, no amusements, newspapers, or tobacco, and no holidays. The standard adopted was a simplified and rather more generous

TABLE B

<i>Household No.</i>	<i>Minimum Standard of Needs*</i>	<i>Minimum Income as reported</i>	<i>Maximum Income as reported</i>
1	85.6	71/7d.	117/5d.
2	90.2	92/4d.	141/-
3	68.7	71/8d.	76/7.
4	40.2	29/-	101/-
5	87.2	71/-	117/5d.
6	113.8	64/-	64/-
7	93.8	170/-	196/5d.
8	117.5	76/-	125/5d.
9	78.8	82/6d.	82/6d.
10	77.7	120/-	120/-
11	101.0	110/-	110/-
12	59.0	100/-	100/-
13	75.0	76/-	76/-

\* Shown in decimal parts of a shilling

used as a basis for this, being brought approximately up to date and adjusted to the present cost of living (1943) by means of Ministry of Labour indices. The results obtained are shown in Table B. It will be seen from this that on the basis of their present reported income, six out of the thirteen families fall short of the minimum standard, although all but one are apparently "secure" on the basis of optimum incomes. Against this, however, it must be remembered that nearly all the households concerned have allotted themselves personal allowances varying from 2/- to 9/- per week, a feature which is omitted from the Poverty standard, and bearing this as well as the factors mentioned above in mind, the present evidence, incomplete as it is, suggests that the question of less than bare subsistence is present, but not general.

(e) *Savings, etc.* Perhaps the greatest difficulty here, as in practically any similar computation, arises from the family's method of spending and distributing its income. It is one thing for the theorist with a nicely arranged and assorted scale of market prices before him to say exactly how much money, having due regard to the maximum benefit to be derived, should be spent on given items of rent, food and clothing. It is quite another thing, even apart from the "pull" of individual habits and tastes, for a housewife whose day is spent partly in a factory and partly amidst the manifold duties of her home to be cognisant of and to have immediate access to all the vagaries of the market. The implications of the latter point are borne out as strikingly in the community with which we are concerned as anywhere. Low-rented and "economical" houses are virtually unobtainable in the district, employment, generally speaking, is of a very casual nature, and earnings tend to vary from week to week as well as from month to month. The nearest cheap market is up in the city, and most organized forms of entertainment require a journey by tram or bus. Habits of expenditure on "luxury" articles, such form of that in use by one of the larger social surveys in progress at that time. The allowances per person were:

Man or woman over 18	.	.	.	.	8/-	per week.
Adolescents 14-18	.	.	.	.	7/-	" "
First child (if under 14)	.	.	.	.	7/-	" "
Each other child 5-14	.	.	.	.	6/-	" "
Each other child under 5	.	.	.	.	5/-	" "

To the above allowances was added a flat rate for coal of 1/6 per family, and the sum thus arrived at, plus the family's rent, constituted the Poverty Standard for each family.

as wireless sets and radiograms,<sup>1</sup> are encouraged by the lump sum method of paying off already described, and by hire-purchase terms and other credit facilities.<sup>2</sup> Yet despite all this, and the fairly widespread habit of gambling (see p. 140) several of the coloured men succeed in putting aside quite substantial sums of money, particularly if they are in business, and banking accounts are used in some instances, and by the "Europeanized" Arabs, who send money by this means back to their relatives in Aden. The less conventional method of banking with the Sheikh among the Moslems has already been described, and it appears that somewhat similar advantage is taken of the services of the Methodist missionary by a few of the less literate members of his flock. Generally speaking, however, the disbursement of funds is left in the hands of the female partner,<sup>3</sup> who is sometimes called upon to handle quite large sums of money, as, for example, in the more "consanguineous" family units, when a man's brother or some other relative or connection is in the habit of making out his allotment note to the woman of the house. The latter custom, not uncommon amongst "unattached" males, is another factor complicating any reasonable assessment of the family budget within this community.

<sup>1</sup> Many of the houses in the district contain a "best room" in which will be found quite expensive articles of furniture, such as sets of tables and chairs, and a large assortment of bric-à-brac, china, candlesticks, sometimes a piano, dishes, etc. To some extent these represent no doubt a form of economic investment as well as serving as a mark of social status. Wireless sets too are quite generally owned and are often of an expensive quality.

<sup>2</sup> Day to day purchases, for example of food, are usually made in small quantities and appear in the majority of cases to be paid for in cash on the spot, although credit is allowed in well-accredited cases. Furniture, in particular, and very often clothing, appears to be bought almost entirely on the hire-purchase system, which also includes the system of saving known as the "club". It is doubtful if actual moneylending or usury (see above on the habits of the Moslems) plays much part, largely, perhaps, because of the Moneylenders Act of 1927, which restricted the rate of interest to 48% (at which figure, in view of the high risk, moneylending among working-class people is hardly a profitable business). There is, however, another interesting form of credit operated by a concern which will give a check for £1 upon payment to them of 1/-. The check can be spent with any tradesman on their list. The company then pay the tradesman, less 17½% on presentation of their check, and collect weekly shillings from the customer until the amount is paid off.

<sup>3</sup> There appears to be a rather important exception to this rule in the case of many of the Moslems, particularly those who are established in shore jobs. The distinction in this respect is related quite probably to the more "dominant" rule arising from their religion which is exercised by the males in these households.

## 5. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONTROL

Both Police and Probation Officers bear witness to the comparative absence of delinquency in the coloured district; and this is all the more significant in view of the popular idea of the area. "They're all right if you leave them alone," was the comment of one high official. Neither department was able to supply any comparative statistics for the various wards of the city, but the Probation officers in particular stressed the relative insignificance of juvenile crime in the dock area.<sup>1</sup>

Without discounting in any way the peaceableness of Bute Town at the present day, it is, of course, doubtful, as the very existence of Bute Street indicates, whether statistics would supply more than a partial index of "law and order". The very separation of the area from the city proper, as well as the distinct character of its inhabitants, perhaps tends to lend support to the view that the wisest judge is he who adapts himself most closely to the *mores*; and gives extra pertinence to the remark above quoted.<sup>2</sup> This is not to deny that the law is enforced in the dock area, but simply to stress the obvious fact that here, just as anywhere else, public control is maintained in the last analysis socially rather than extraneously. This is all the more evident in view of a certain degree of mutual antagonism which exists between the community and the Police and Courts. Feeling themselves already at odds with the outside world, the coloured men on the one hand resent any attempt at dragooning and "interference" with their affairs, and on the other are often correspondingly zealous to see

<sup>1</sup> The officer in question offered an interesting criterion in support of his argument. It is his duty and practice to visit the homes of children who have been before the Juvenile Court, in order to see under what conditions they are being brought up. In one working-class district—Splott—his visits were very unwelcome to, and even dreaded by, the parents, because they signaled to neighbours that the household in question had been getting into trouble. In the dock area, on the other hand, he invariably met with a much more friendly reception, and this he attributed to the fact that his visits were not frequent enough for their purpose to be generally recognized there. But it is possible that a difference in community attitudes towards his mission would also explain his different reception.

<sup>2</sup> See the remarks on Bute Street as a "vice quarter" in the chapter on "Maritime Setting of the Community", p. 47. Rather more attention seems to be paid to the suspected political than to the criminal activities of the neighbourhood. At a meeting of the community advertised as having reference to the coloured children the only white man present was a plain-clothes policeman. It is understood that all public meetings are similarly attended. The reason seems to be a fear of Communist propaganda and activity.

that their good name is not impugned through the misdemeanour of any of their number. This explains the strong objection many of them have to the street gambling (see p. 141), and accounts in part for their occasional violent denunciation of some fellow-member of the race for some more or less domestic frailty. Again, for a large proportion of the community, Islam in its legal as well as its religious aspects enjoins a strong sense of propriety and self-discipline. A sanction which is far more meaningful to those it affects than any imposed from outside would be secured on occasion by the withdrawal of financial as well as social support, and extends even to the enforcement of some degree of control over the wives of fellow-members when the former offend.

It will be obvious from this, as well as from the previous analysis of the social structure of the community, that social control is effected largely through specific groupings and cliques. Situations as well as conduct are defined mainly by comment and by talk.<sup>1</sup> The fact that, when ashore, the men meet few persons except of their own kind means that a great deal of their time is spent in detailed discussion of each other's affairs. The extreme sectionalism which prevails also means that, although control over personal and private affairs is in some respects limited to a fairly narrow circle, completely communal and political action is possible, and, though rare, it is by no means unknown. It seems to be achieved only in case of absolute necessity and when more immediate interests and the very existence of every separate group are directly involved. It will be recalled, for example, that the crisis resulting from the Shipping Assistance Act brought about the institution of a special committee composed of representatives of all sections, West Indians, West Africans, Somalis, Arabs, etc., who collaborated for a common end—the survival of the community as a whole. Yet it is doubtful if even this instance of co-operation would have come about had it not been for the energy and initiative of one man, the leader of the Colonial Defence League. It is significant that ten years earlier, when applying the Aliens Order to the coloured seamen, the Police were able to assure one section, the West Indians, that the Order was aimed at another section, the Arabs, without provoking

<sup>1</sup> The situation here is in many ways not unreminiscent of the village, or scene of primary contacts, which Thomas and other writers have exemplified as agencies of maximum control. cf. W. I. Thomas and F. Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, and W. I. Thomas, *The Unadjusted Girl* (esp. pp. 42–59).

any form of common reaction. Again, only two years before this, sections of the Arabs themselves, numbering several hundreds, fought out an industrial dispute with knives and sticks in the Cardiff docks.<sup>1</sup> Even to-day, factionalism among the Negroes on the one hand, and the Moslems on the other, is not uncommon. There is a definite tendency for Sierra Leoneans, Nigerians, etc., and sometimes even tribal divisions of the latter, to keep to themselves in small cliques. One Gold Coast man, commenting adversely on the domestic affairs of a Freetownian, referred pointedly to the latter and his comrades as "sons of freed slaves". A frequent comment was that the Africans are "split tribally", and other Africans, the Kru in particular, were given a strong reputation for "keeping to themselves" and unwillingness to co-operate on racial lines. The West Indians, too, tend to keep somewhat apart, and even to group themselves according to the islands from which they originate. Although they achieve religious harmony, Arabs and Somalis also keep somewhat apart, and Arab and Somali crews are signed on separately.<sup>2</sup> Between the Somalis and the Negroes the gap seems on occasion to be even wider, and individual Somalis and Arabs speak disparagingly of members of the Negro race.

In these circumstances it is not surprising that all the aspirants to political influence in the community should have appreciated the necessity of unifying their potential followers, and in this respect, if in no other, the main champions meet on common ground. As already mentioned, there are two main and rival associations in the field, the Sons of Africa and the Colonial Defence League. The latter has a fairly close connection with the Cardiff Communist Party, which in turn has a watching brief over the affairs of the community. Until recently, the Sons of Africa professed themselves merely "cultural" and non-

<sup>1</sup> cf. *Manchester Guardian*, 14th July, 1923:

"Tribal disputes between Arab seamen led to a riot of grave proportions in Cardiff. Some 800 coloured men were involved. Knives were used freely and the police had to make a truncheon charge before order was restored. Injuries were numerous, but there were no deaths.

"About 10.30 a.m. a great number of Arabs of different tribes assembled outside the offices of the Board of Trade in Bute Street. Chamari tribesmen, who formed the greater proportion of the crowd, attempted to prevent members of the Adenese and other tribes from securing engagements in ships."

<sup>2</sup> The secretary of the local seamen's union stated that although West Indians and West African crews are sometimes signed on together, Arabs and Negroes cannot be mixed. Arabs prefer to keep together for cultural reasons. The signing-on is now effected on a nationality system of rotas.



political.<sup>1</sup> They have been obliged by force of circumstances to adopt a more positive line of appeal in order to survive owing to the alleged "betrayal" of the community by one of their members over certain Colonial Office proposals. The individual in question was disowned by the Association and so great was the strength of local feeling that, it appears, he left the district rather than remain the continual object of adverse and pointed comment.

This incident showed conclusively that, despite internal jealousies and rivalries, the community is well able in time of crisis to effect some form of political unity in the face of common danger from outside.

## 6. FAMILY LIFE AND GENERAL SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

(a) *The Family.* It would be unwise, and is indeed impossible, to generalize about either the family life or the social patterns of the community. The situation is conditioned both by the general cultural antecedents of the various sections and the texture of the occupational background. On the whole, however, the structure and habits of the family probably differ little from those general in similar strata of British working-class society, where in addition to the familiar "conjugal" household of the West there is some tendency for married sons and daughters and other near relatives to live in one or other parental home. Apart from the usual economic reason for this practice, the colour complex has also a bearing in this case. The difficulty of securing accommodation in other parts of the town disposes young married couples to look no further than the neighbourhood in which they were born, and some of the few who have gone farther afield return as often as possible to their old haunts.<sup>2</sup> As the area, particularly the smaller houses, is already well occupied, it is not difficult to see how a rather more "consanguineous" pattern is reinforced. On the other hand, it appears as if a fairly strong movement, not so much up into the city proper or its suburbs,

<sup>1</sup> According to one informant, the Sons of Africa was started by a number of people who objected to the "dictatorial" methods of the leader of the Colonial Defence League, who up to that time seems to have had the field virtually to himself.

<sup>2</sup> A couple who had succeeded in securing a house in the Splott area on relatively good terms admitted that although they were rather better off for amenities, they missed very much the "old life" of Loudoun Square and its inhabitants.

but rather further south towards the extreme end of the Docks, has been taking place in recent years. The latter district (see map), containing Adelaide Street, South William Street, etc., lies about half a mile due south of Loudoun Square, is separated from it only by the docks business quarter, and almost touches the waterfront. It seems previously to have been almost exclusively a Spanish and "poor white" area of settlement. Now, on the basis of a random count, about one in every three of its inhabitants is coloured. In other words, as happened previously with Loudoun Square itself, it looks as if the "natural history" of the city is repeating itself here, and the coloured immigrants are gradually driving out the original settlers.<sup>1</sup>

As already mentioned, economic reasons require that the larger type of house should be filled by a number of families or their equivalent in terms of lodgers. The original family group, therefore, is often surrounded by a small fringe of "unattached" males, and it is fairly evident, particularly when the tenant and lodger are fellow-countrymen, that the group functions as a single economic unity.<sup>2</sup> The same applies, too, in cases where relatives either share part of the same house, or "live with" the family. On the basis of some 50 known families it was estimated that the latter was the case in some 26 per cent. of the households concerned; that both relatives and lodgers were living with an original family in some 14 per cent. of cases; that lodgers alone were taken in some 45 per cent. of cases, and that only some 15 per cent. of the families were living as independent households.

(b) *Marital and other Relations.* Apart from economic considerations, there is no doubt that this situation has some effect on sexual and extra-marital arrangements in general. Indeed, in the lengthy absences of the husband and with the physical proximity in which the younger people are placed, it would be surprising to find it otherwise. Yet, in speaking of this matter, it is necessary to proceed again with caution and with a due regard for perspective. This is all the more essential as, in a

<sup>1</sup> cf. H. W. Zorbaugh, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Compare Oliver Madox Hueffer, *Some of the English*, p. 37, which offers a useful sociological description of life in a South London "slum". "In many cases the 'lodger' was a connection by blood or marriage, a workman or 'chum' of the husband or wife, and thus accepted as one of the family. . . . In such cases the family ideal was less interfered with and the small additional income a welcome extension to the family budget."

previous report on an African community in this country,<sup>1</sup> some stress was placed on the subject of promiscuity. In this respect, so far as the Cardiff community is concerned, the impression gained is that there is little difference between it and other sections of English society with which it can appropriately be compared. Moreover, what "irregularities" occur seem explicable fairly readily either in terms of the habits and customs of the seafaring class as a whole, or of the peculiar complications which arise in our society out of social and sexual contacts between white and coloured persons. The general rule in the community as elsewhere is for couples who live together to be legally married, and in some respects it seems that a church is preferred to a registry office marriage, sometimes for sociological as much as religious reasons. In some cases, as already mentioned, the woman has had an illegitimate child before marriage, and paternity is avowedly sociological. Sometimes, too, couples who are not married to each other, or of whom one or both has a spouse elsewhere, maintain settled establishments, and provided their general behaviour is in accordance with local notions of respectability, are regarded in the same light as if they were married. In any case, etiquette demands that the lady of the house be addressed and spoken of by the conventional title applied to a married or older woman of the married age group, i.e. "Missus". Apart, however from these orthodox forms, which provide the preponderating type of establishment, a number of households are run on more or less "polyandrous" lines. In addition to either a legal or socially recognized husband, such a woman may have one or even two other temporary "husbands", whom she accommodates in her house on their return from sea. In some cases, she is virtually a professional "freelance". In a few cases the husband connives at the practice; in others, where it is less frequent, he may be unaware of what is going on. In any case, the woman concerned is in receipt as a rule of at least two and sometimes even more separate allotments, which in a general sense may be regarded as "retaining fees". The business, though precarious,<sup>2</sup> can be a very profitable one while it lasts. Children born of such alliances keep the surnames of their natural fathers,

<sup>1</sup> Fletcher Report, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Obviously more precarious and complicated in war-time owing to security reasons, e.g. no notice may be received of a man's arrival before his ship docks in Britain.

and these frequently take a keen interest in the subsequent welfare of their offspring, who may be adopted in some cases by a relative or some vaguer connection of one of the parents. As already mentioned, the coloured men as a whole are usually very fond of their children, even to the extent of "spoiling" them by gifts and attention. The attitude of the community towards domestic arrangements of this kind varies. While not exactly condoning "loose" behaviour, the general view seems to regard it with a certain amount of toleration, provided the social consequences are not too dire or too blatant. Individual coloured men, however, are inclined to look upon the matter very self-consciously, and usually eschew deliberately any personal contact with the women concerned, although they may remain good friends with their menfolk. It appears to be the case also that a certain sense of responsibility is incorporated in public opinion to the extent of ensuring that a man does not often leave a woman whom he knows he has made pregnant.<sup>1</sup> According to Miss Nancie Sharpe—

In sixty cases of coloured people living in London and Cardiff it was possible to check the date of birth of the first child against the date of marriage. In 41 cases, either marriage had not yet taken place though the parties had been living together for years, or marriage took place after the birth or conception of the first child. In 19 cases, however, marriage took place before the conception of the first child. The sample could not be tested for reliability or representativeness.<sup>2</sup>

It is obvious, however, that in considering extra-marital or extra-legal practices a proper sense of perspective can be gained only by comparison with white society, and for Britain there is no means of effecting this. It has been estimated in Chicago, however (with some 3.38 million inhabitants) that nearly 500,000 extra-marital sex contacts take place weekly.<sup>3</sup>

The above-mentioned English observer's impression of the coloured households is that

The domestic relations of the families are often satisfactory, and marriage is quite as often happy as is marriage between British people of the same standard of life. Some of the common difficulties which do not generally occur

<sup>1</sup> In some cases, of course, men sail without knowing that the girl with whom they have been consorting has become pregnant. (Miss Nancie Sharpe.)

<sup>2</sup> From unpublished material collected by Miss Nancie Sharpe, *circa* 1932.

<sup>3</sup> With various kinds of prostitutes such as "Juvenile", "Potential", "Amateur", "Young Professional", "Old Professional", "Field Workers", "Bats", "Gold Diggers", "Kept Women", "Loose Married Women", and "Call Girls". cf. Reports of B. C. Roloff, Chief Executive Secretary of the Illinois Social Hygiene League, quoted by Joseph, *op. cit.* See also Walter C. Reckless, *op. cit.*

with coloured people are the question of the man keeping an undue amount of his earnings, lack of care and thought for the woman in little things; the man leaving all thought and work for the children to his wife, and the question of drunkenness. The men are generally really attached to their homes and spend much of their time there, they are affectionate and kind and make much of their wives. Some of them are exceedingly thoughtful and do very much to help, and they do their best for the children whom they almost spoil. When a man is paid off his ship and comes home, the children certainly benefit from the lump sum he brings. It is noteworthy that children of coloured men (see later remarks) almost always appear well fed and are warmly dressed, in spite of poverty. . . . Testimony to happiness is given by the sympathy which most of the white wives have with coloured people in general. They take sides with them; they include themselves in the category of coloured, and talk of "we", and they join the coloured men's societies. . . . Some, of course, have no such sympathy and wish to dissociate themselves as far as possible from coloured people, even speaking to their children as "you coloured". These women are, however, very much in the minority. Many women also pay tribute to their husband's qualities, and say they are happy. One woman said to me, rather amusingly, but most decisively, "I wouldn't change my husband for fifty white men."

The wives of Arab husbands, in particular, speak very highly of their spouses and of their fidelity and thoughtful treatment. Not infrequently, however, marital affairs are disorganized and the household complicated by the implications of the colour complex. A white girl in Cardiff in marrying a coloured man runs a very considerable danger of social ostracism, not only from acquaintances and friends,<sup>1</sup> but from members of her own family. The psychological effect of this will be obvious. Such a woman's position becomes even more difficult when she bears children and the general psychological and emotional conflicts which are set up as a result between her and her previous family have repercussions on her relations with her husband. It is in no sense surprising, therefore, that cases of desertion on either side sometimes occur, and in turn lead to the breaking up of such coloured-white families and the placing of the coloured children with their grandparents or with some other family with whom the mother goes permanently to reside. This feature too sometimes gives rise to the type of sexual behaviour mentioned above, when, as it is important to realize, the only way of obtaining adequate economic support for oneself and one's family is by some extra-legal arrangement or more illicit practice.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> One of the social functions of the Sons of Africa, it was explained to the writer, was to "protect" the wives of members from the "cold shoulders" and insults which they were liable to receive from previous school friends at a mixed dance.

<sup>2</sup> The writer found ample evidence of the complexity of some of these unions when trying to sort out parentages in connection with anthropometric data. There are, of course, "bawdy" as well as careless households to be considered.

In short, not only is the colour line acute in terms of relations between the sexes, but metaphorically speaking, there is little, if any, marginal ground in which free social intercourse can take place. There is added difficulty, too, in the process of social selection whereby, particularly for a younger coloured man, following conventional racial patterns, the "conquest" of a white woman is something which carries a certain amount of prestige, and is therefore an increased incentive in that direction.

(c) *General Social Behaviour*. A very great deal of the actual "social behaviour" itself appears to take place in the streets. The occupation of the greater proportion of the menfolk, which takes them away from their homes for lengthy periods, is also responsible for leaving them, married and single alike, more or less at leisure for varying intervals between voyages. This, in view of the segregation of the community, and more particularly of the very limited facilities for recreation in the district, means that almost their whole time is spent in the immediate neighbourhood and in what few diversions are available there.<sup>1</sup> Of these the most persistent is the game known in America as "crap-shooting", or "shooting the dice".

(d) *Gambling*. Though this is the most prominent form of recreation observed, it would be a mistake to assume that it is universally popular. Rather, it is supported and carried on by a more or less regular school of "professionals", as they might be called. The pitch always occupies the same spot on a convenient pavement in one of the longer streets. At most times of the day and every day until it is too dark for the numbers on the dice to be seen, there are usually two such pitches in operation, surrounded by a small crowd of onlookers or intending participants, its size varying with the weather and the time of the week. The week-end is the time of greatest interest, largely because on Fridays the men draw their weekly Pool money.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Comment on this point has already been made (p. 43). Speaking about the cricket team which the coloured men used to run, one of the West Indians pointed out that they had to go right out of the district to get a game, and then they were immediately met with the cry, "Look at the black men playing cricket!" It should be said that since the investigation was carried out, the establishment of a Colonial Hostel in Bute Street by the Colonial Office has brought about some alleviation of the difficulty over amenities.

<sup>2</sup> During the Second World War all merchant seamen while not actually on articles formed part of a general "Pool" from which they were taken into employment according to the needs of Government service. During this time they were paid Pool wages, e.g., fireman, £3 8s. 5d. per week; trimmer, £3 6s. per week, and so on.

Amounts wagered vary very much, from sixpence to, it is said, as much as £20: so far as was seen, however, they rarely amounted to more than £6 at a time. The procedure is for the player to call out the stake for which he is prepared to play, or to pitch it on to the pavement, and when his challenge has been taken up by the arrival of a similar amount beside his own, to throw his own two dice from the road side of the pavement towards the wall.<sup>1</sup> The players are mostly of the younger set, and their activities are looked upon with varying degrees of disapproval by a large number of the community; but the general reaction is one of amused or cynical tolerance. Children are not encouraged to look on at this performance—possibly because it is outside their status—and are prohibited from imitating it in the street, but they occasionally do so in play. The main communal objection to this dicing appears to be the occasional scuffles to which it gives rise, and the unwelcome attention which the scene of the arena receives from the Police, who are in the habit of making occasional raids on the players; but as there is an efficient alarm system in operation, they have usually broken up and dispersed before the agents of the law can appear round the nearest corner. In their attempt to obtain actual identification, the Police are said to have developed the technique of the surprise attack, swinging round the corners suddenly in a car or arriving with blackened faces.<sup>2</sup>

Other and more general diversions are betting on dogs and horses, and some interest in football pools. There are at least two ostensible betting houses, and others possibly exist; and on Saturday afternoons there is a steady flow of both male and female

<sup>1</sup> The dice are thrown with a characteristic movement of the hand and jerk of the wrist, something like the action of the bowler on the green, and simultaneously the thumb is flicked with an audible click against the side of the index finger, the thrower usually interjecting some cry of encouragement. Seven is a winning total, but if a ten is thrown, another ten must be obtained before the player can score a winning number. Various combinations on the same theme may be substituted. It does not appear to spoil the throw if in the course of their run the dice hit against an intervening object.

<sup>2</sup> Two solutions of this "social problem" were suggested to the writer by members of the community; (a) that much higher fines should be imposed on the culprits when caught, the usual 5/- fine being inadequate; and (b) that the players should rent a room where "they could gamble away to their heart's content". The speaker who made the second suggestion mentioned, however, that he thought the players would be too mean to pay the rent. Another objected to this suggestion on the grounds that they had often tried to get rooms, but the difficulty about a registered club was that it could be entered at any time by the police whom (unlike other strata of society in similar cases) "they hadn't got the means of squaring".

punters into and out of the private houses concerned. The practice of betting seems to be carried on irrespective of sex or age, and although it is impossible to state the average size of bet, it seems likely that a large proportion of the wagers fall into the 1/- category. There is no dog track within the area, but it is understood that there is an attendance of devotees from the district at the Craven Arms track, and stories, possibly exaggerated, are told of the winning and losing of several hundreds of pounds in a single evening. It is as well to qualify doubt concerning these, because, socially at any rate, the gambling complex is an important factor, and the size of the amounts which are reputed to change hands should not be lightly discounted. An unmarried seaman might return to the district, or arrive in Bute Street, after being paid off, with £50 or more in his pocket, and might spend the bulk of the sum in this way. It is also possible that the larger amounts circulate not unevenly within a certain set. The Somalis, in particular, have a strong reputation for gambling, and are also reputed to be very generous with their winnings.<sup>1</sup> There are, however, other ways of disposing of money made in this way. A Gambian bought a motor car with his week's winnings at dice, and possibly a fair amount finds its way into the pockets of the brewers, or is diverted into less socially approved channels. In general, an estimate of the effect of this practice on the family or personal budget would make interesting reading, as it would also in other strata of society.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There are several possible explanations of this kind of "generosity". An African asked what he did when he won a lot of money, said that he gave it away to his friends, and agreed that, in effect, besides pleasing them, he thus made a form of investment against a "rainy day". It is possible also that some of the Somalis who are unused to handling large sums of European money do not appreciate its relative value, and that the remark that "money means nothing to them" is in a sense quite true. The suggestion is enhanced by their frugal way of living. It is said that "they take little food beside soup".

A more general point in reference to the gambling, perhaps not immediately obvious, is the likelihood of its ranking as an institution among many of the non-Europeans. It is understood that in some Asiatic-owned restaurants, pieces are supplied as a matter of course after the meal, and that the gaming serves as a kind of mental exercise and psychological stimulus (rather like bridge in Europe), the money itself simply providing the means by which it is carried on. It has to be remembered that the cultural attitude in the West towards money has about it something almost sacred. Consequently, to the ordinary Western observer there is a strong element of sacrilege in the treatment of large sums of money without appropriate care and respect.

<sup>2</sup> It is doubtful if social surveys in general make nearly enough allowance for the economic influence of this factor. In February, 1936, the *Economist* estimated that the total national expenditure on gambling was approximately £400 millions per year, a figure which, it is reasonable to suggest, has considerably increased rather



(e) *Clubs and the Cinema.* Among the younger members and the women, film-going is by far the most popular form of entertainment, but the local church young men's clubs are fairly well attended on weekday evenings. At one of these meeting places, to which several visits were paid, there were usually some twenty to thirty boys and young men aged from twelve to twenty playing table billiards and ping-pong. The minister in question has tried hard to increase interest in this respect, and has in some measure succeeded.<sup>1</sup> The girls have Guide companies, and there is also a company of the Girls' Life Brigade, which seems at various times to have proved fairly popular. The older women members of this church also meet once a week under the chairmanship of the minister's wife, and hold tea-parties, discussions, etc., on the usual church lines. Though by no means universally subscribed to, these associations and gatherings seem to keep going a certain amount of social life. The same might just about be said of the men's club attached to the same church. At two or three visits paid by the writer, there was a small attendance of the older members of the church, mostly missionary-converted West Indians and West Africans. The club in question is non-sectarian, and the minister prides himself on his liberal attitude towards Islam, in the obvious hope of attracting Moslems into his assembly. As in the case of the boys' club (see note below), it is possible that a more imaginative programme, such as the introduction of educated coloured speakers and discussions on colonial topics, would infuse some dynamic into the proceedings. At one time, this particular church ran a very well patron-

than decreased in subsequent years. In terms of the total adult population of the kingdom this sum averages out at some £15 per adult, and this places the Loudoun Square situation in a more adequate perspective.

<sup>1</sup> The club in question is carried on largely with the aid of voluntary adult helpers, mostly living in other districts. There is a small subscription of a penny or a few pence per week for the older boys. The minister has tried to run it on "parliament" lines, but it seems very doubtful if his more "cultural" and educational attempts make much headway. At one committee meeting which the writer attended, the question of play readings came up, but the minister's suggestion of a Shakespearean play damped down the lukewarm interest aroused. Most of the proposals coming from the boys themselves were for some form of recreational activity—gymnastics and hiking for example, and no enthusiasm was shown for counter-proposals for any more intellectual type of exercise. The boys' other suggestions—for dancing and a mixed club—were dismissed. Some effort was also made by another voluntary helper in this club, a schoolmaster, to provide coaching in educational subjects. One or two of the boys confided to the writer that they enjoyed discussions, and attended meetings of the men's clubs for that reason. The whole subject of the running of a boys' or young men's club is a very complicated one, and its discussion is outside the scope of this work.

ized cinema show. The young girls are likely to attend up-town cinemas at least twice if not three times a week, and sometimes even more often.<sup>1</sup>

(f) *Drinking and Dancing.* The extent of the drinking habits of the community is difficult to estimate, though the Moslems form an exception in this respect. In public, however, the practice appears to be of fairly moderate extent, is carried on by both sexes more in terms of regular cliques than generally, and produces no signs of excess within the community-area itself. In Bute Street an occasional drunken woman can be seen even in the daytime. Beer is the most common drink, sweet wines are popular, and rum is favoured as an occasional beverage by the Negro seamen, but its high price makes it somewhat prohibitive. Another popular beverage is "near" or hop beer, which is sold in Bute Street cafés even after hours at considerably enhanced prices, as is diluted whisky. In general, drink and drinking habits are much more a Bute Street matter, as, judging from both reports and appearances, alcohol is often definitely eschewed in Loudoun Square homes. This is particularly the case amongst those members of the community who are under the influence of the church, and amongst some, at least, of the younger people it is regarded with a certain amount of self-conscious diffidence, possibly on account of the known aphrodisiac qualities of certain kinds of drink.

In some cases a somewhat similar attitude seems to be adopted towards dancing, perhaps for a like reason, although there is no doubt of its popularity among the younger people. As we have mentioned, however, there is a marked absence of facilities for it in the district, and the Sons of Africa, who used to hold periodical "hops", were obliged to take a hall in the adjacent district of Grangetown for the purpose. The Anglo-Catholic church holds

<sup>1</sup> Walking down Bute Street towards the community area about 6 o'clock in the evening one meets the cinema-bound exodus. One coloured girl confided to the writer that she went to the cinema every evening in the week if she could manage it, and attended a band concert on Sundays. Cinema-going seems as popular in South Wales as anywhere else in Britain. In a sample of employed and unemployed young men and women from Cardiff, Newport and Pontypridd, A. J. Lush found that next to "walking about", the cinema was their principal form of leisure-time activity. About 22 per cent. of his sample were in the habit of visiting it at least twice a week.

Contrary, perhaps, to general belief, several of the coloured girls declared, genuinely it seemed, that they much preferred a "gangster" or "tough" film plot to the "sloppy" love-interest type. One child, aged 14, was quite sure that her favourite type of film was one which showed at least one "good murder". How far this kind of interest may be regarded as a cultural product of the district is a matter for conjecture.

an occasional dance, but the Methodist church, with which a larger number of coloured young people are affiliated, does not permit its hall to be used for this purpose. The reason offered unofficially for this prohibition was the fear of certain social consequences. The girls would slip away during the intervals and be given alcoholic drinks by their escorts with the object of exciting them sexually. This is a practice far from unknown at dances in other sections of society, but it is possible that a factor in the whole recreational situation may be the early development of the coloured adolescents. Their more rapid physical growth seems to be borne out by the general agreement of other observers, and tentatively also by anthropometric observations made by the present writer.<sup>1</sup> It seems to be especially marked in the case of the girls, many of whom are said to begin menstruating at the age of 10 or 11, and are apparently sexually mature when they leave school at the age of 14/15. Their behaviour, too, is apparently more mature than that of male youths of an older age, who have been known to report that they strongly object to the girls "hanging around them". A certain precocity in the use of paint and powder may doubtless be explained as imitation.

While the comparatively early development of the child of mixed blood may perhaps be explained in terms of racial differences, there is no doubt that purely cultural and psychological consideration should first be given full weight. There is as yet no clear evidence that the biological processes are genetically different by reason of race,<sup>2</sup> and many factors in the present environment—the nature of the family life with its frequent and rather general lack of discipline and restraint, perhaps a very early acquaintance with the nature and implications of sex, a continuous contact with the more romantic type of film-show, and, perhaps most particularly, a strong and increasing sense of frustration in every direction owing to the gradual consciousness

<sup>1</sup> cf. K. L. Little, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> See Otto Klineberg, *Race Differences*. "... a great many factors may help to determine the time of the first menstruation. Health and economic status certainly, and climate and sex stimulation in all probability. Before concluding that race also enters, we must rule out these various factors which in themselves seem to account for all the observed differences between the various groups studied. In any case ... the time of the first menstruation has probably no great significance for the problem of racial psychology" (p. 107).

Ploss and Bartels, *Woman*, vol. 1, after an equally extensive survey of the literature, also find it impossible to arrive at any final estimate of racial differences in this respect.

of their own "peculiar" position, and the barrier of colour prejudice, would all tend, through the deep harmony which exists between mind and body, to produce physical as well as psychological precocity.

## 7. THE RELIGIOUS OUTLOOK

(a) *The Christians.* It is almost a truism to say that the type of religious belief found in the community also reflects to a large extent the general educational standard, and in some degree the social aspirations of a fairly representative section of it. To some of the older West Africans and West Indians, the Wesleyan Methodist church makes a strong appeal: the attendance of this group, though small, is very regular, and their devotions are carried on with all the zest and sincerity of the convert of the mission type. In this church, the attendance is divided about equally between the sexes, the womenfolk being in the main the wives of the men concerned. Few young people appear to attend, but one or two coloured women sing in the choir. The service is conducted on orthodox Methodist lines, and although an occasional vocal assent comes from the congregation in the course of the minister's address, there is nothing in their mannerisms or in the nature of the service itself, apart from the weekly singing of "For those in peril on the sea", to mark it off from any other church of this sect. The minister seems to frame his sermons mainly in the style of the "manly appeal". The same church seems to be used also for the majority of the coloured weddings which take place in the district; while the minister's readiness to bury coloured persons, even when not regular attendants at his church, seems to have neutralized a certain amount of incipient criticism of him in other ways. Such events, particularly weddings, create a fair amount of interest and excitement among the womenfolk; the male attitude is relatively apathetic. They are also the occasion for a certain amount of conspicuous economic consumption, which undoubtedly is vastly out of proportion to the income of most of the parties concerned. As the following report indicates, the elaborate emulation of middle-class standards in this respect is a further illustration of the importance to certain sections of the community of white bourgeois behaviour.

"When I arrived at the church at 2 o'clock a large crowd of women, white and coloured, holding their babies, was standing outside. A number of children, boys and girls, were whiling away the time by chasing each other up the stone steps which lead to the porch. Ten minutes later, the church door was opened by the caretaker, who took the opportunity to shoo away a bunch of 6-year-olds who were yelling at the tops of their voices, and to kick off a mongrel dog. 2.15 saw the arrival of the groom (coloured, aged about 21) and the best man (white, about the same age). These were dropped along with two ushers, one white and one coloured, from a hired motor car. The car drove away, and returned presently with another hired car and two private cars, from which a number of guests descended. The hired cars drove off again, and returned five more times with further guests whom they had apparently picked up at their homes. The guests were met at the door of the church by the ushers, who escorted them to their seats, and also fulfilled the no less important function of expelling numerous small children from the church and generally restraining the curiosity of the crowd. The guests, incidentally, were all quite well dressed. The arrival of the bridesmaids was the next event. There were six. Two small girls dressed in violet, two larger ones in green, two grown up people in blue (rather nice shining silk). They were all coloured people. The bride then arrived with her step-father (a West Indian). She was a coloured girl about 22, rather pretty, and wore white with a good veil. She was greeted with confetti from the crowd outside, and the congregation rose to its feet. It numbered some sixty persons. There were about twenty in each party, about half of them coloured, and mostly women, and some twenty to thirty people in addition to the bridal party. The ceremony then proceeded, aided by a choir, apparently specially enlisted, as it was mainly composed of coloured members. After the service the bridal party and guests were re-transported by the cars, whilst the crowd, having scattered confetti indiscriminately over all emerging from the church, waited patiently to see the last guest depart.<sup>1</sup>

Compared with the Anglo-Catholic establishment (a parish church) at the other end of the district, the Methodist Mission appears to be relatively popular amongst the coloured community. Altogether, however, it cannot be said that either church plays a very large part in the religious affairs of the community.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Document recorded by Mrs. Little.

Apparently there is some variety in the "correct" style of behaviour on these occasions. At another wedding attended, the coloured bridegroom, a young man of about 20, chewed gum solidly throughout the ceremony. The men usually wear dark suits, but the women are dressed in bright colours, and shiny silk frocks and silk hats are much in favour. It is necessary to add, of course, that aesthetically the coloured girls are able to "carry off" a brilliant shade in a way that would be impossible for white women.

<sup>2</sup> The lack of religious contact is not altogether surprising when the matter is considered in a wider perspective. On one occasion the speaker delivering the evening's address spoke of missionaries returning from Africa who claimed to be able to distinguish "the converted from the heathen by the light in the eyes" of the former. In reference to a visiting minister, who had preached, a Sierra Leonian complained to the writer that the man, a returned missionary, was going round the town telling people that the inhabitants of Sierra Leone "were in the habit of eating each other".

(b) *African Customs.* Apart from the more conventional practices of Christianity, a number of more or less indigenous African customs, such as the holding of wakes after funerals, and even some drumming are carried out.<sup>1</sup> A Fante man reported that a small celebration of an Aday festival had been held "out in the country" on one occasion when a Gold Coast stool holder visited the district: the party, consisting of men and women, had taken food and wine out with them and dancing took place. The informant mentioned, however, that it was easier to keep up such customs in Liverpool, where there is a large colony of Gold Coast people and palm wine is available.<sup>2</sup> On a more recent occasion a wake was held over the coffin of a dead man in one of the houses of the district. The men and women friends of the deceased occupied separate rooms, and there was food and drink, singing and speech-making.<sup>3</sup> In some cases, it is possible that a certain interest in the occult is mingled with what on the surface might be construed as a purely materialistic outlook, although this would probably be strenuously denied by those who are most proud of their European education. One case of sorcery amongst the Arab community was reported.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In conversation with one or two of the older West Africans it was a little difficult to decide whether they were referring to the performance of certain ceremonies in West Africa or in Cardiff. One man mentioned the custom of calling for the bride with a band; also the practice of the Africans of holding their "own" funeral and wedding ceremonies after the service in church. He added in reference to the first that the expense of musicians was now prohibitive. In the second case some celebration similar to the wake described above is undoubtedly held on occasions, but whether or not it could be described as religious is another matter.

<sup>2</sup> The Aday ceremony is a traditional and religious custom of the Akan-speaking peoples of the Gold Coast. Universally held throughout Ashanti-land, it used to be observed twice in every successive period of forty-three days. It deals with the propitiation, solicitation or worship of ancestral spirits, and in the special sense it refers to those ceremonies at which the spirits of the departed rulers of the clan are propitiated, their names and deeds recalled, and favours and mercy solicited. Part of the ceremony is carried out privately by the chief and his family and retinue in the stool-house, and then the chief makes a public appearance to receive the homage of his followers. The ceremony is that originally described by the traveller Bowdich as the Yam Festival. For a better and more up-to-date description see R. S. Rattray's *Ashanti*, chps. V. and VI. In modern Ashanti, it is understood, the festival has much the same secular significance as the King's Birthday in our society.

<sup>3</sup> The man in question was the victim of a recent murder. He was discovered lying in Bute Street with severe knife wounds in his body. See footnote (p. 106) with reference to Mr. Justice Charles's remarks at the subsequent murder trial.

<sup>4</sup> The wife of an Arab ran away with another man. The husband, aggrieved at her loss, proceeded to work magic against her, with the result that she was frightened and eventually returned to her own family, who complained to the Police about the matter. They, of course, said they could do nothing about it.

(c) *The "Fatalists"*. The religious outlook of the womenfolk is probably most variable of all. As already mentioned, there is an attendance of white wives and relatives at the Methodist church. Other women say that they were brought up in the Catholic faith, but the extent to which they practise as distinct from merely professing this code is possibly summed up in the remark of one that she considered "personal confession" enough. In general, among this section as among many of the men there is a strong vein of what for want of a better word may be described as Fatalism. It consists mainly of a body of superstitions and superstitious explanations of personal experiences and less usual outside phenomena, based on the principle of "what will be will be".<sup>1</sup> It represents what is probably a somewhat debased form of Christian dogma, but seems to share at the same time the philosophical notion of acceptance which is implicit in most widespread forms of religion. Ritualistically, it is exemplified in various practices such as "touching wood", avoiding ladders, etc., which, with a minimal expenditure of intellectual and devotional energy, secure the individual in his universe of everyday affairs. The exceptional and the calamitous are quite beyond the technique of the individual "fatalist", but just as plainly and observably they are beyond the technique of everyone else, and so there is little point in wasting effort in endeavours to forestall them. How far this rather vague outlook is shared by the church-going devotees it is difficult to say. Some, at least, attend church as a piece of social reciprocation for favours done them—the procuring of a job for a daughter, for example. Others are frankly sceptical of the minister's harangue, but appreciate that it is his "duty" to deliver it.<sup>2</sup>

(d) *The Moslems*. Mention should be made once more of the strong body of Islamic faith. The adherents of this creed not only carry out their ritual and religious obligations with vastly more fervour and enthusiasm than the rest of the community, but are correspondingly surer both of themselves and their own way of life. The principal injunctions of Islam are fulfilled

<sup>1</sup> One typical remark by a white housewife when asked if she had sought shelter during the air raids was: "I stayed here: I say if it's coming to you, it will."

<sup>2</sup> In comment on one of the minister's "parables" illustrating the conversion to temperance of a person given strongly to alcohol, one of the West Africans said frankly that he did not believe the story: no one who was so fond of drink as all that would be persuaded to give it up so quickly.

assiduously, and the various prohibitions<sup>1</sup> enjoined by the Prophet are on the whole rigorously observed, as are Ramadan and other fasts and festivals,<sup>2</sup> in celebrating which Arab dress is worn by most of the Arabs. This constant display of devotion is regarded by the rest of the community with a certain amount of respect and even a little admiration. There is a feeling that it gives "tone" to the district. Not unnaturally perhaps, the religious confidence of the Moslems is charged with a considerable degree of hauteur towards whatever professions other members of the community make, in respect not only of the lack of communal sense amongst the latter, but of their ritualistic laxity. The Moslem comments, in particular, on the factionalism amongst the Negroes. He, the Moslem, "prepares himself" by bathing;<sup>3</sup> "gives himself to God", etc., and he comments sarcastically on the inability of the Christian to do either. Some of the younger followers of the Prophet, however, are to be suspected of less positive and whole-hearted adherence.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> One explanation offered for one of the best known of these prohibitions, the abstention from pork, provides an interesting anthropological slant. In the course of his "mission", Jesus called one day on a family which included several children, to whom he spoke. The parents did not care for his proselytising, and the next time Jesus came they shut the children away in a room so that he should not have the opportunity of approaching them. Jesus asked for the children, however, and eventually inquired what was in that particular room. The parents replied that there was nothing there except some pigs. Jesus replied "Yes, there are pigs in there right enough". When the door was opened a number of little pigs did indeed run out in place of the children. And so pigs are really human beings, and cannot be eaten.

<sup>2</sup> The sheikh wears Arab dress every day, and with his beard and turban presents a very patriarchal appearance. The obligations of fasting are met with a degree of elasticity. If a man is engaged on any kind of physical work he is not expected to make more than a token abstention. On the other hand persons more lightly employed are not permitted to take food from sunrise to sunset. On the approach of Ramadan, the Arab members of the A.R.P. post were careful to have their hours of duty arranged to cover the night watches. At other times, if one entered the Post at sundown one would discover the Arab warden kneeling on his mat in prayer.

<sup>3</sup> One of the writer's West African informants announced one day that he had become a Moslem. He had expressed great admiration for the Moslems on several occasions in the past, and now proudly escorted the writer over the Mosque, pointing out, in particular, the bathing arrangements. The reason he gave for his change of faith was that he had been disgusted by the non-appearance of the Roman Catholic priest at the funeral of his landlady. But as, several times previously, he had expressed his difficulty in obtaining a good bath anywhere in the district, it is just possible that the Moslems' bath-house had some relation to his conversion. On the other hand the man in question, a very sociable type, seemed to have a particular interest in joining societies and clubs. He is a member of various organizations not only in Cardiff but in other parts of the world.

<sup>4</sup> One young Moslem who had recently been conscripted into the Army and was giving up Islam confessed that he was glad to get rid of all "that old stuff".



## 8. SOCIAL TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Of all the inhabitants of the district the children are the most picturesque. Wonderfully variegated in the colour of their skin and in texture of hair, they immediately catch the eye of the visitor, and have provoked lyrical descriptions from novelists and journalists alike. The children, coloured and white, attend the same schools, the respective representation varying according to different localities of the area. In the South Church Street council school and St. Mary's school, which are both close to Loudoun Square, there appear to be something like eight coloured for every two white. Closer to the Pier Head, in Eleanor Street, the coloured children are in a proportion of less than one in three. There is practically no difficulty whatsoever regarding their ability to mix freely in all these cases. They laugh and play their games together with the greatest freedom from racial consciousness. Entering the playground during an interval, one sees an Arab and a Negro child busily engaged in swinging some undoubted representative of the "Nordic" race to and fro by his legs. In the Loudoun Square play park the same freedom is seen. Children of all colours and shades chase and push each other about without the least regard to the inhibitions which trouble their elders. The same disregard of race, too, is found among children of school-leaving age, and so far as their relations in Loudoun Square are concerned, it probably lasts until adolescence in the physical sense is completed. Among many of the white boys who have been reared in the district it is possible that colour prejudice never develops, but matters are different with some of the girls, who subsequently display all its symptoms in regard to their erstwhile school friends. The reason for this is mainly a matter of social inculcation—they marry white men and move in circles where even acquaintanceship with a coloured person is a mark of inferior social status. In general, however, at least during their childhood, the coloured young people are un-self-conscious to a considerable degree. "They are gay and witty, and often popular at school. They are particularly good at singing and dancing, and love bright colours."

(a) *Psychological Factors in the Home.* These features of un-self-consciousness and precocity often go hand in hand with "problem

behaviour" and an absence of restraint. In view of the situation at home in a number of cases, this is not surprising, if, as psychologists indicate, the emotional development of children is profoundly affected by the relations existing between husband and wife, *not to mention* the general adult behaviour around them.

A factor which does not seem to have been studied in sufficient detail is that which arises directly from the sheer limitation of physical space in overcrowded homes and seems to lead to a lessening of social and psychological distance between the individuals concerned. It may signify, in effect, very often that the barriers of respect and obedience which in other sections of society separate the older from the younger age-groups either do not grow up or are broken down. It may mean, also, the development of a certain ambivalence in regard to the status of the child itself. A youngster of 10 or 11 is called upon in one situation to fulfil the rôle of and to behave like an adult: at another moment it is allowed to be no more than its "rightful" age. For example, such a child may be attending school in the morning, and on its return may have to assume virtually all the responsibilities of a bed-ridden mother in catering and cooking meals for the household, along with the entire supervision of a younger brother or sister. It is as if the change from childhood to womanhood were effected in the short space of time which it takes to move from the school class-room to the kitchen-range. What the more subtle effects of this dichotomy of rôle are on the psychology of a developing child it would be difficult to say, but overtly if often seems to give rise to the type of behaviour which an outside observer is apt to classify as unreliable or irresponsible, so that he may look upon as traits of temperament what are largely inadequate processes of adaptation. The child or young person concerned is even more oblivious to the implications of the position: habits of adjustment have been learned at so early an age that by the time he or she is old enough to speculate on any given situation he is already accustomed to reacting appropriately and automatically to it.

The case of the coloured child in this respect is complicated still further by social attitudes towards its parents. The racial position of, say, a Negro father, and in some cases the more or less "professional" life of the mother seem to afford an equally good illustration of problem situations to which the child may react in

several different ways. He may, for example, espouse the cause of the father and by a process of association develop an attitude of antagonism against all those (usually white people) whom he holds responsible for derogatory attitudes towards coloured people. Or he may come substantially to accept white values and thus learn to regard his father with good-humoured contempt.<sup>1</sup> In effect, through the dichotomy of racial attitudes he has the psychological choice of identifying himself with either party—with father or with mother. In any case, there is most probably a weakening in the quality of conventional respect given to both parents; on the one hand, because white attitudes can never be totally ignored, and on the other because the emotion of pity, which is an inevitable result of such paternal association, is likely to lead to an attitude of superiority towards the object pitied. For particularly sensitive individuals the unconscious conflict between loyalty to father and to mother may be irresolvable. When a psychological issue or conflict is particularly intense, the only “safe” course from the point of view of mental equanimity is entirely to disregard it; in other words, in the case in point, deliberately to repress previous emotional fixations on either parent. The habit of filial “neutrality”, thus unconsciously and gradually acquired, may lead in turn to a habit of detachment in other respects, and in particular to a neglect of any arduous emotional as well as intellectual problems.

(b) *The Problem of “Control”*. Situations of this kind are worth some attention because the main complaint in the district regarding the children is that they run quite wild. Members of the community as well as outside observers say that the parents have no control over their children, and some of the parents themselves admit this and call upon the school-teachers for advice and help. To appreciate their difficulty the general environmental circumstances as well as the psychological factors mentioned above have to be borne in mind. What is of more

<sup>1</sup> A rather striking example of this kind occurred in the case of a child who had a lighter-skinned father and a darker-skinned mother. A “well-off” white person interested himself in the boy, aged about twelve, and adopted him temporarily in his home. The war came, the white patron was called away, and the child was sent back to his parents’ home. He soon started to stay away for long periods, and eventually, after an absence of some days, was found by the police at the house of some white friends of his previous sponsor. He had explained to them that during his absence his mother had died, and his father was now living with a “black housekeeper”. Further evidence of this kind of response to “prestige” adds extra point to this hypothesis.

significance than the actual poverty of many of these homes is the fact that the father not only possesses a rather inadequate knowledge of English and cultural habits somewhat different from English ones, but is barely alive to the implications and type of social behaviour customary in our society. "Control" in the present sense means in the last analysis that the child is in the habit of being influenced by persons older than himself. Such a habit is gradually acquired rather than deliberately inculcated, and its acquisition in the home sets the ultimate seal on the whole of the child's social orientation. When, however, situations are never consistently or sufficiently defined for the growing individual, when he or she is required to act in a number of diverse ways, and when, moreover, a pattern of conflicting loyalties and resentments is set up, it is not difficult to see how hard it is for a routine of obedience to be established. Correlatively it can be appreciated how in the absence of more or less set norms of rational behaviour the child comes to act "irrationally", and how when personal obligations are customarily construed as a matter of impulse rather than premeditation, the reciprocation normal to ordinary social intercourse takes place only sporadically.<sup>1</sup>

Parents in the community at the very best are but partially alive to the significance of these factors, and those who are conscientious conclude that "good" behaviour is something which can virtually be "magicked" into their offspring in the schoolroom in the same way as reading and arithmetic. The outside observer sees only the more overt evidence, and in seeing it forgets that he is applying the codes and notions of conduct appropriate to the middle class or the upper working class to quite another section of society.<sup>2</sup> In any case he sees only secondary phenomena. In many cases hours of meals are irregular,

<sup>1</sup> cf. Hueffer, *op. cit.*, pp. 193-97.

"It was in the matter of discipline that the mothers of Romwell showed themselves least intelligent. Themselves of a generation which, as a natural result of the war, suffered an instinctive revulsion against any overt act of compulsion . . . not only was home discipline lax; attempts to supplement it from without were fiercely resented. At home the child was bewildered by consistent inconsistency, soundly smacked at one moment for what it might be caressed for doing the moment after; supported against any aggression from without while subjected to capricious injustice, according to the parent's state of temper, from within. In the schools, discipline was no less difficult of enforcement. Did a teacher punish a child for some intolerable offence, the odds were that he or she would shortly be confronted by a screaming virago or, as was worse in its effect upon their after-careers, haled before a magistrate on a charge of aggravated assault."

<sup>2</sup>An important warning is issued by the authors of *Children of Bondage; The Per-*

in some cases they may not be served at all; children may never reach school on some mornings owing to the more pressing nature of some domestic business. This latter instance applies more usually to the exigencies of boarding- or lodging-house keeping, where various official returns have to be completed, and where the child as the only literate member of the household is expected to cope with the matter. Judging, however, from the appearance of the younger children, it would seem that they are not only fairly robust, but well looked after in both the physical and material senses, since in clothing and equipment they compared by no means unfavourably with children in another, and possibly more prosperous, working-class district. Again, although the mothers are said to lose interest in their offspring after they have reached the age of 6 or 7, there is no doubt that the children are treated very kindly by both parents in the ordinary way, and unless the mother happens to have a fit of "temperament",<sup>1</sup> their life is probably a very happy one. It is evident that they display considerable vitality in their long hours of communal play, and often extreme restlessness during school hours, though this again may be a function of home conditions.<sup>2</sup>

(c) *The Background of Knowledge.* The implications of these group patterns of behaviour are important not only over the question of individual discipline but when the more formal process of education arises. It is now realized that successful teaching in school, as elsewhere, depends as much upon conditions outside, and a receptive frame of mind on the part of the scholar or student, as upon any other factor, including school equipment and the skill of the instructor. The accomplishment of these in elementary schools in general, and in the Cardiff coloured quarter in particular, is rendered difficult not only by old-

sonality Development of Negro Youth in the Urban South (Washington, D.C., 1940). They point out that what the middle-class observer is inclined very often to put down as deficiencies in social training are no more than the behaviour traits of "lower-class" society, and should be assessed in that light rather than as a psychological problem.

<sup>1</sup> By report (probably valid) various kinds of punishment include placing a child's hand on a red-hot stove; locking up in a dark cellar for many hours; and belabouring a child's head with a broom-handle. It seems possible that a certain amount of mental deficiency should be held responsible for these and other drastic methods of correction as much as mere "temperament".

<sup>2</sup> The Police report that play is carried on in the streets until 2 a.m. on occasion. A teacher in the Infants Department of one of the schools concerned suggested that the great difficulty of keeping the younger children sitting on the seats provided for them might arise from their being unaccustomed to the use of chairs in the relative absence of such articles of furniture in the homes.

fashioned class-rooms, large classes, an overworked and (during war-time conditions at any rate) inadequate number of experienced teachers, but by the broad and peculiar circumstances prevailing amongst the community itself. Here, significantly, the effect of the interaction of young and old may be seen; for if the ability to learn and be "educated" depends largely on the desire to do so, it is also bound up with the educational heritage of the society concerned.

The standard and type of education possessed by the adult members of this community is very variable, but on the whole, and certainly by European criteria, it is undoubtedly very low. Few of the Arabs and Somalis, for example, are literate, and although more or less compulsory instruction is provided in the Koran school it cannot be said to contribute very far towards an understanding of English letters, methods of education, or English culture in general. Many of the Africans, and possibly more of the West Indians, appear to have received a primary education, mainly at Mission schools; some of them have passed through a secondary school, and a few are self-taught. The womenfolk appear to be no more or less literate than other members of the social and economic class from which the majority of them are drawn, and whose educational attainments do not reach the writing and speaking of grammatical English. Again, although most, if not all, the British Africans and West Indians understand English, their speaking of it varies a great deal in fluency and expression.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, although quite a number of the Arabs understand English well enough for simple social and commercial intercourse, even fewer of them can speak it adequately.

(d) *Lack of Educational Incentive.* On top of this must be added a number of psychological and economic factors. Most of the households are poor enough to require economic contributions from the children as soon as possible. Equally important are the implications which arise from the colour complex. It has already been mentioned that coloured juveniles obtain jobs in the ordinary way only with the greatest difficulty. Apart from employment at sea, the boys are lucky to find work as errand boys or

<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, several of the African seamen are probably better equipped linguistically for practical purposes than the average English public school boy in that they can make themselves understood in at least four languages, viz. English, German, French, and Spanish, not to mention one or two African languages.

page boys, or in some other "blind-alley" occupation, and for the girls the Juvenile Employment Bureau can rarely find anything outside the "colour line".<sup>1</sup> Virtually the only outlet with any prospects in this respect seems to be in entertainment, where both male and female youngsters can sometimes secure jobs as dancers and singers, and an occasional engagement in a film crowd.<sup>2</sup> In the circumstances, it is not surprising that the rebuffs received become part of the group experience, are communicated to the child at an early age as group tradition, even if individual parents have no hand in the matter, and produce in him an apathy towards formal education which easily and quickly defeats any personal and sometimes limited attempts which are available to cope with the situation in the schoolroom.

To pass into a secondary school in Cardiff every child is obliged to pass an examination which is held annually on a competitive basis. Free places in the secondary school are offered to the successful children of parents whose incomes fall below a certain level, and there are also scales of aid governing small maintenance grants and the loan of textbooks (and in the case of one of the dockland schools, a grant of clothing also). These grants are relatively quite small and do not by any means offset the amount which children in a working-class home might be expected to bring back were they in some form of employment.<sup>3</sup> Even so, the number of entrants from the dockland schools

<sup>1</sup> It is reported that many juveniles will not attend the Bureau on account of the ostracism they meet with at the hands of white juveniles (the Fletcher Report mentions a similar fact in respect to Liverpool). Sometimes a coloured boy or girl is more successful if he or she applies personally for a job, in that a face-to-face contact may break down an employer's stereotyped outlook on the colour question. Sometimes, however, the bare mention of the applicant's home address is enough to cut short any negotiations.

<sup>2</sup> This type of employment is, of course, uncertain as well as sporadic, and in the case of young girls it is not without its "moral" dangers, particularly if the show concerned should break down in the course of a tour, leaving the entertainers stranded and without resources.

<sup>3</sup> The actual secondary school fees in Cardiff are not high—in the neighbourhood of £10 per annum, and the main difficulty over sending a child to such a school from the point of view of working-class parents is probably maintenance. The maintenance grants begin when the weekly income of the parents does not exceed £2 10s., and in such a case full grant, i.e. £2 per annum, is made during the first year of the pupil's school life, followed by a slightly increasing scale for the subsequent four years. Smaller grants are made to parents whose incomes are slightly larger than this. It seems doubtful, however, if these allowances can offer much attraction to a household living on a low margin of subsistence. Even a child of 14 or 15 may be expected to bring in about £20 per annum, and with all the hazards of unemployment, sickness, etc., to be considered there can be no possible doubt about the greater pull of this inducement.

and of successes gained by coloured children in recent sessions of the Cardiff "Special Place" Examination have been negligible when compared even with other working-class districts.<sup>1</sup> The fact that with working-class areas the conditions of competition are more nearly equal, i.e. inferior educational equipment of parents, the difficulty of studying owing to the stress and noise of crowded living conditions,<sup>2</sup> etc.—means in the main, though not entirely, that the coloured lack of advance must be put down to an absence of initiative on the part of parents and children.

It is not difficult in terms of the sociological situation as a whole to appreciate how this outlook and the unemployability of the coloured juvenile come to constitute a vicious circle. In view of the very dubious possibilities of any social and economic return on an outlay of effort and money, which can be provided only by considerable sacrifice on the part of all concerned, very few parents even bother to investigate the possibilities of further education for their children.<sup>3</sup> The young people themselves hear only of the failure of other coloured juveniles to obtain better-class and better-paid jobs, and conclude that they are well rid of school as soon as possible. The circle, therefore, is broken only very occasionally and in quite exceptional circumstances, as when, perhaps, his schoolmaster is particularly impressed by the intelligence and promise of a certain pupil and is able to persuade

<sup>1</sup> It is doubtful if much is gained by making a direct comparison in this respect with a middle-class school. Quite apart from the difference in economic factors, the social conditions are likely to have a striking effect on the situation. The fact that entry into the Cardiff secondary schools is dependent on a competitive effort means that failure to qualify on the part of a middle-class child jeopardises not only his own prospects, but the status of his whole family, since it will now be virtually impossible for him to enter the "white-collar" occupations, which constitute the social and obligatory goal of members of his class. This incentive, which is not only absent from but is sometimes frowned upon in working-class circles, is an important reason for the relatively poor showing of the latter group.

<sup>2</sup> On the subject of overcrowding and its effects in this connection, it is interesting to note that the investigators of the Merseyside Survey found an inverse correlation between the number of scholarship successes obtained and the social and economic status of the district concerned in Liverpool.

<sup>3</sup> This point was borne out strikingly in the course of the writer's proposed scheme for advancing the education of children in the district. Most of the parents with whom he discussed the question were entirely ignorant of the educational opportunities and amenities in the city, and had utterly no idea of ways and means of taking advantage of them. A few parents, of course, for one reason or another were entirely opposed to the idea of secondary education; one woman, for example, complained that it made the children "stand-offish". The attitude of the Moslems in this respect is somewhat difficult to assess. The official view is that anything which betters the young people is to be encouraged, but individuals sometimes took the line that too much education was bad as well as unnecessary. This form of resistance can be understood largely in terms of religious conservatism.



the child's parents, and if necessary, the educational authorities themselves, to enable the youngster to carry on his studies. A number of the parents themselves, especially the Negro fathers, are alive both to the value and the implications of a good education, and do their utmost, often in the face of considerable hardship and discouragement, to see that at least one of their children obtains it. Occasionally, too, a more far-sighted or socially ambitious parent insists on apprenticing her sons to mechanical engineering or an allied trade. In the great majority of cases, however, particularly with the girls, the multiple factors of economic disability, prejudice, apathy, and illiteracy transcend any likelihood of positive action of this kind, and leave the child of mixed blood where his racial position has landed him—almost as a piece of social and economic flotsam and jetsam on English society.

(e) *The Social Results.* In view of all these circumstances, therefore, it is not surprising that of all the community the "mixed bloods" should be most alive to the colour implication. Their position in Loudoun Square is less indeterminate than in the world outside, but in degree rather than kind. They lack on the one hand the cultural and national pride upon which many of their fathers at the worst can fall back, and on the other they fail to gain any compensatory ties in the society of the land in which they were born.<sup>1</sup> Above all, often they either lack or are little disposed to what ultimately is their main hope of achieving adaptation to the greater society—an understanding or an analysis of their own relation to it. In such a context it is not surprising that many of their actions are negative rather than positive; that their behaviour is accounted unreliable; and that their characters sometimes appear shiftless. It is a further example of the closed circle: it is not worth their aspiring to anything, because there is nothing for them to aspire to, and (in a sense) there is nothing for them to aspire to because they will not make the effort of aspiration.<sup>2</sup> The personality traits of the hybrid

<sup>1</sup> One significant exception to this rule was found in a "mixed blood" who had been born in West Africa of a white father. He spoke of West Africa as "home".

<sup>2</sup> cf. R. R. Moton (*op. cit.*, pp. 201-2), who remarks in reference to racial discrimination in the U.S.:

"One subtle and serious result of this condition is that Negro youths are deprived of many of the incentives that stimulate ambition. In the majority of places where Negroes serve, there is no such thing as a beginning at the bottom and working to the top."

have been effectively described by Stonequist and other writers in terms of the "marginal man",<sup>1</sup> and need no further recapitulation here.

But to take the situation of this community to its logical conclusion, it is by no means the children of mixed blood alone whose position in this respect is marginal. With the possible exception of the Moslems, all the segments are seeking in some direction, some less consciously than others, assimilation in the white greater society in which so far they have set foot only geographically. This is particularly true of the Negroes of both the Afro-West-Indian and "Political" segments, and accounts perhaps for a great deal of their mutual jealousy and self-conscious assertion of place and position. The "Mixed Bloods" as a whole tend to solve their problem largely by withdrawing from it, but among the former groups and even the womenfolk the issue is appreciated, even if rather dimly, in far more positive terms. Both the militant counter-prejudice of some of the Negroes, and the efforts to emulate English middle-class ways on the part of others, are attempts in the same direction. The men accommodate<sup>2</sup> themselves to white society in a variety of ways—by joining local associations and organizations such as the Com-

<sup>1</sup> See R. E. Park, E. B. Reuter, and E. V. Stonequist. The latter in his *Marginal Man* (Scribner's) writes:

"The hypersensitivity of the marginal man has been repeatedly noted. This trait is related to the exaggerated self-consciousness developed by continually looking at himself through the eyes of others. It may result in a tendency to find malice and discrimination where none was intended. By brooding over his situation and by repeatedly rehearsing past experiences in his imagination a distorted view of the world is built up. Having this conception of the world in his mind he is more likely to provoke antagonism and prejudice against himself. His own attitude evokes the responses which he dislikes. . . .

"Or it may lead to withdrawal which prevents the individual from having experiences which might change his attitude and give him more self-confidence. . . . Out of the inferiority complex emerge various compensatory reactions. These differ greatly with the particular individual. Excessive egocentrism is present but in relatively few cases—and even in these it may antedate the crisis experience. The desire to "rationalize" is evident with some. The person of weaker character finds his race or nationality a convenient scape-goat; failure through personal defect is attributed to the discrimination of race prejudice. Correct diagnosis, however, is difficult, since prejudice is frequent enough to make the individual's plaint a fair one."

<sup>2</sup> In some cases accommodation is very whole-hearted and occasionally successful. It may consist in a denial of colour-bar practices; or may blame coloured individuals themselves for provoking trouble. One or two instances were related to the writer of coloured young men starting trouble in the town on their own account, and incorrectly blaming it on the use by the other party of some racial epithet, such as "dirty nigger". On one occasion, too, a West African, who was walking along a path with the writer, noted a very obviously drunken Scandinavian near by and commented in deep disgust—"These foreigners!"

munist Party, the Buffaloes, etc., by permitting white membership of their own organizations, by deprecating racial assertiveness among their own members, and by accepting on occasion and even seeking white collaboration. Among the women-folk such adjustments are impossible except in specific instances, but their appreciation of the attitudes of the world outside is no less acute than that of their menfolk. It has the concomitant effect of producing in them an obvious and well-marked sense of community-loyalty, which, even if superficial, affords some degree of compensation.<sup>1</sup>

### 9. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The main points which appear to arise out of this survey are as follows. In the Bute Town or Docks area of Cardiff, of which Loudoun Square is the focal point, there is a mixed coloured and white community in the proportions of perhaps rather more than four coloured persons to one white. The basis of this community is the coloured seaman and white housewife, and the main racial elements represented are Negroid and Arab. The community has been in existence in varying size since the end of the last century, but did not reach significant proportions until the time of the First World war. Since then it has become firmly established, and has now been in existence long enough to produce a second generation of adult age and child-bearing potentialities. The community is segregated with some considerable degree of rigidity from the rest of the city in the geographical, social and psychological senses; in the last respect the existence of strong patterns of colour prejudice among residents of the town is the main causal factor. In concrete terms, this prejudice appears to have been instrumental in shaping the sociology of the community to no small extent. In regard to marriage and ordinary social intercourse with the opposite sex the coloured seamen have so far been virtually limited to women of the poorest strata of society, and often of the class of professional prostitutes. Although in more recent years a first generation of coloured girls has become of marriageable age, this constitutes only a

<sup>1</sup> For example, one of the white women reported that she had lost her last factory job through contesting (literally and physically) a remark derogatory of the district,

partial alleviation of the domestic situation, since, apart from numbers, their domestic abilities cannot be rated very highly. The community suffers as much from this general domestic and social instability as from any other factor, and these contribute to its general poverty and ineffectiveness as much as any non-sociological consideration, such as unemployment in a shipping depression, differential rates of relief, and the part-economic, part-racial competition of white seamen. To these factors must also be added the high cost of living in the district—itsself a function of the very high rents—and the limitation of educational and vocational opportunities for the coloured juveniles and children.

These factors, taken in conjunction with the overt manifestations of colour bar in the city, seem to have produced a reaction which in emotional terms is in some cases even stronger than the outside attitudes of prejudice. The same reaction seems, in turn, to bring about on occasion some very definite sense of group consciousness and group responsibility; since under any strong and overt manifestation of colour bar, differences of cultural and racial background tend to become very largely submerged, and for the time being forgotten. It is almost entirely through this type of event that the community can be spoken of as sharing a common body of experience, for it will be plain from what has preceded that it is as yet too diverse in terms of sect, race, language and culture to be able to lay claim to any continuous and marked communal body of interest. Nevertheless, the last point requires some qualification, since among the large section of African origin there is at least one organization at work with, it appears, a fair degree of cohesive force. The implications of this movement, though nominally social, must realize themselves in political form before they can become effective, and as yet they do not engage the interests of the womenfolk to any great degree. The Moslems on the whole are apathetic to it, and the movement is still under the suspicion of the more prominent members of the rival party.

In present circumstances, the community may be expected to continue more or less in its present form, and perhaps even to grow in numbers. The solution to its difficulties lies in greatly increased absorption in the city's life and activities. This calls not only for greater racial tolerance and equal opportunities of

employment and social intercourse, but for a general "levelling up" of educational and cultural standards. The latter is a *sine qua non*. On the other hand, the community may be expected to undergo further vagaries of economic hardship if the following conditions continue to obtain after the Second World war:

- (1) Strong colour bar patterns in Cardiff and elsewhere with the possibility of their resumption also in the shipping industry in particular, if any depression should occur.
- (2) The presence of an increasing number of coloured juveniles, more particularly girls, in the area.
- (3) The restricted opportunities and incentives offered to the coloured boys and girls to train and to find better-grade employment either in Cardiff or elsewhere.
- (4) The low degree of literacy amongst the community as a whole.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 6

Sample of Questionnaire distributed amongst Heads of Households with a view to obtaining data relating to the Family budget.

No. of Bedrooms No. of Other Rooms No. of Occupants Amenities—Bathroom	Children: Under 14      14-18      Over 18						Ages of Head of Family	Head of Household
								His Occupation
	M	F	M	F	M	F		

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<i>Income (per Week)</i> Earnings of Father Earnings of Mother Earnings of other Members of the Family, for example, Children Income from other sources, for example Lodgers	<i>Expenditure (per Week)</i> Rent and Rates Food Clothing Coal Gas Lighting Household Sundries Personal Sundries
<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>

*Notice:—Household Sundries* includes

Travel  
Cleaning Material  
Laundry  
Clubs  
Furniture

*Personal Sundries* includes

Entertainment for children, sweets, cinema, tobacco, football pools, and other minor items.

Church Collections, Salvation Army, etc., Birthday Presents, and gifts other than those included in Food.

## PART II

# THE HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT OF RACIAL RELATIONS IN BRITAIN

### CHAPTER 7

## THE NEGRO IN BRITAIN, 1600 A.D. TO THE PRESENT DAY

### I. THE FIRST COLOURED INHABITANTS OF GREAT BRITAIN

The identity and the date of arrival of the first coloured inhabitants of or immigrants into Britain is a matter for speculation. It seems most likely that Negroes were first introduced as slaves in the time of Elizabeth as an outcome of the expeditions of John Hawkins between Africa and the New World; but it would not be unreasonable to suppose that there had been much earlier, if infrequent, visitors. An American Negro author, basing his claim on the writings of Tacitus, wherein he finds mention of "the swarthy faces of the Silures, the curly quality, in general, of their hair"<sup>1</sup> suggests that a black aboriginal race lived in the British Isles in pre-Roman times side by side with a white one.<sup>2</sup> There is no evidence, however, of skeletal types approximating to the Negro in the palaeontological records of these islands, and a controversy similar to that which surrounds the Upper Palaeolithic discovery of "negroid" remains at the Grimaldi Cave in the South of France does not arise. Lack of skeletal remains does not, of course, rule out the possibility of well-pigmented skins having been an aboriginal feature, but passing over the question of the "swarthiness" of the Romans themselves, and the probability of negroid elements amongst their auxiliaries and camp followers, it seems safest to start the British history of the Negro about the middle of the

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus, Loeb Library edition, trans. Sir William Petersen, London (Heinemann), 1920, pp. 187-9, *Agricola*, §11.

<sup>2</sup> John Rogers in *Crisis*, Jan., 1941.

16th century. English merchants had just begun to turn their attention to the Guinea trade, and John Lok, who sailed for the West Coast of Africa in 1554, brought back with him as part of his cargo "certaine blacke slaves whereof some were tall and strong men". They apparently found English food and the English manner of life endurable enough, although "the colde and moyst aire doth somewhat offend them".<sup>1</sup>

English participation in the slave trade did not become significant until about the time of the Restoration in 1660,<sup>2</sup> and it is doubtful, therefore, if the "black man", whether of African or of East Indian origin, was a familiar figure until well on in that century, except as a rather chance visitor, or when imported from Portuguese colonial territories. Possibly a paragraph in the *Mercurius Politicus* of August 11th, 1659, affords the earliest public evidence of the employment of Negro serving boys in this country. The advertisement in question suggests that the missing lad's hair was "polled" or cropped, after the Puritanical fashion of the time.

"A negro-boy, about nine years of age, in a grey searge suit, his hair cut close to his head, was lost on Tuesday last, August 9th at night, in St. Nicholas Lane, London. If anyone can give notice of him to Mr. Thomas Barker at the Sugar Loaf in that Lane, they shall be rewarded for their pains."<sup>3</sup>

The population of "black-a-moors" in London grew quite substantially as it became the fashion among the nobility and leisured class to possess them as servants. Pepys records that when in 1662 Lord Sandwich brought over Catherine of Braganza from Portugal to be the queen of Charles the Second, he carried in the same ship by way of a present to the young ladies of his family "a little Turke and a negroe".<sup>4</sup> The latter were clearly something of a novelty in England. Some seven years later, Mr. Pepys himself is found occasionally employing a Negro girl in his household as cookmaid with satisfying results:

"(5th April, 1669.) For a cookmaid we have, ever since Bridget went, used a black a moor of Mr. Bateliers's, Doll, who dresses our meat mighty well, and we mightily pleased with her."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by C. M. Macinnes, *England and Slavery* (Arrowsmith) 1934.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> cf. "The Black Man". *All the Year Round*. A weekly Journal conducted by as. Dickens, vol. 13, New Series, 1875, pp. 489-93.

<sup>4</sup> and <sup>5</sup> *ibid.*



## 2. THE POSSESSION OF NEGROES AS SOCIAL INSIGNIA

It is possible that the fashion of Negro attendants was derived from the habit of Venetian merchants of importing them as slaves and servants, though by the end of the 18th century it was more original to have a Chinese page than a black one: "Dear Mama," wrote the Duchess of Devonshire to her mother, "George Hanger has sent me a Black boy, eleven years old and very honest, but the duke don't like me having a black, and yet I cannot bear the poor wretch being ill-used; if you liked him instead of Michel I will send him, he will be a cheap servant and you will make a Christian of him and a good boy; if you don't like him they say Lady Rockingham wants one".<sup>1</sup> The great ladies and the courtesans of the period were not slow to perceive the advantage of having a black-skinned attendant beside them the better to show off the whiteness of their own skins. They preferred small plump-faced boys, whom they dressed exotically and more in an eastern than African style of dress, and treated as pets. It was the duty of the little Negro boy to wait on his mistress's person and tea-table, to carry her train as she moved to and fro, to take charge of her fan and smelling-salts, to feed her parrots, and to comb her lap-dogs. So usual was the rôle that Garrick's portrayal of Othello as an African Negro is said to have provoked the ironic comment: "Here is Desdemona's little black boy, Pompey; but why does he not bring in the tea-kettle and lamp?"<sup>2</sup> Artists of the period also used the Negro as a means of aesthetic expression both on canvas and on the signboards of inns, and were quick to perceive the enchanted brilliancy of colour obtained by contrast with his dark skin.

The practice of riveting silver or copper collars round the necks of the Negro serving boy and manservant, and of bestowing on them high-sounding classical names, was part of the mode, and a clear indication of their status as playthings and chattels.<sup>3</sup> In this habit of the ladies and gentlemen of Queen Anne's time of inscribing their coats of arms and cyphers on the collars of their Negro slaves there is an interesting cultural parallel with the

<sup>1</sup> V. Sackville West, *Knole and the Sackvilles* (Heinemann), 1922.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

modern dog collar engraved with the name and address of the animal's owner. That such a collar was considered as essential for a Negro slave as for a dog is shown by an advertisement in the *London Advertiser* for 1756, in which "Matthew Dyer intimates to the public that he makes silver padlocks for Blacks or Dogs; collars, etc."<sup>1</sup>

The ascription to the Negro servants and slaves of classical names like Pompey, Plato, Socrates, etc., seems to have emanated partly out of the literary fashions of the day, and partly perhaps out of a certain whimsicality in the intellectual grandeur of the appellations and the supposed very meagre and servile intelligence of their object. The custom lingered on well into the 19th century and after the abolition of Negro slavery in this country. It was also a way whereby the more literary-minded could perpetuate their favourite philosopher. As Miss Mackenzie-Grieve puts it, "The Right Honourable the Earl of Suffolk and Brandon, with a fine disregard for convenience of address, had his black boy named Scipio Africanus".<sup>2</sup>

### 3. THE NEGRO'S DOMESTIC ROLE

Though at first the importation of Negroes into Britain was mainly to satisfy a fashion and a fad on the part of the nobility, its domestic convenience was soon apparent, particularly amongst

<sup>1</sup> As a badge of servitude, the metal collar is, of course, of some antiquity, and its use even in contemporary times was not confined exclusively to the Negro. In the Museum of the Antiquarian Society in Edinburgh some years ago there was a specimen whose inscription shows clearly that the collar was used on a white man—"Alexander Stewart, found guilty of theft at Perth, December 5th, 1701. Gifted by the Justiciaries as a perpetual servant to Sir John Erskine of Alva." (cf. *Chambers' Journal*, Jan., 1891, vol. 68, pp. 65-7, "Black Slaves in England"). In his prologue, written on the reproduction of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Prophetess* in 1690, the poet Dryden jestingly proposes that the English fighting under William III in Ireland should

"Each bring his love a Bogland captive home;  
Such proper pages will long trains become;  
With copper collars and with brawny backs  
Quite to put down the fashion of our blacks."

(*All the Year Round*.)

<sup>2</sup> cf. Averil Mackenzie-Grieve, *The Last Days of the English Slave Trade*. This use of names affords one of the clearest indications of the lowly status of the Negro and produces an interesting parallel with the modern "race-caste" system of the Southern states of the U.S., where the custom in many cases is to call all Negroes by some such nickname as "Tom", irrespective of their real names. Miss Sackville West records that "the black page at Knole, of which there had always been one since the days of Lady Anne Clifford . . . had always been called John Morocco regardless of what his true name might be" (*op. cit.*).

planters and others accustomed to be waited upon by black servants in the Tropical settlements. The custom was emulated and practised extensively by the end of the 17th century by wealthy West India merchants returning to England, and there is no doubt that the precedent for it was set in the highest circles.<sup>1</sup> It was natural, perhaps, that planters coming home on holiday, or to settle down in retirement, should prefer their old servants to new white ones, but the mode was imitated, in turn, by middle-class aspirants to gentility. The commanders of slaving vessels, for example, were allowed to transport a few slaves in each cargo for their personal profit. The post of captain of such a craft was a lucrative one, and those who gained it were prone to make display of their good fortune by the use of gaudily-laced coats and cocked hats, and large silver or sometimes gold buttons on their coats. A special mark of distinction was the black slave attending them in the streets.<sup>2</sup> Female Negroes reached this country in the same way, and ambitious merchants, already engaged in the slave trade at Liverpool and Bristol, as well as other members of the prosperous and rising middle classes, would bid eagerly against each other at an occasional auction for the privilege of owning some of the human left-overs of a cargo of flour, wine and other merchandise.

The newspapers of the 18th century contain a fairly extensive record of these public auctions and private offers of sale in all parts of the country, as well as descriptions of runaways. The following are examples:—

*London Advertiser*, 1756: "To be sold, a Negro boy aged about fourteen years old, warranted free from any distemper, and has had those fatal to that colour; has been used two years to all kinds of household work, and to wait at table; his price is £25, and would not be sold but the person he belongs to is leaving off business. Apply at the bar of the George Coffee-house in Chancery Lane, over against the Gate."

Another advertisement in the *Public Ledger* for December 31st, 1761, reads like an offer of young dogs:

"A healthy Negro Girl, aged about fifteen years; speaks good English, works at her needle, washes well, does household work, and has had the small pox."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In 1891 there existed at Hampton Court the bust of a favourite slave of William III, the head of which was black marble and the drapery round the shoulders and chest of veined yellow marble. . . . (*Chambers' Journal*, *ubi cit.*)

<sup>2</sup> John Latimer, *Annals of Bristol in the Eighteenth Century*.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in *Chambers' Journal*, *ubi cit.*

From Bristol in January 1768 comes the record of another youthful Negro slave in the following advertisement:

"To be sold, a healthy Negro slave, named Prince, 17 years of age, 5 feet 10 inches high, and extremely well grown. Enquire of Joshua Springer, in St. Stephen's Lane."<sup>1</sup>

The following is an example of a bill of sale. "BILL etc. etc.—To all to whom these presents shall come David Lisle of the parish of St. James, etc. etc. greeting. Know ye that the said David Lisle, for in consideration of the sum of thirty pounds good and lawful money, etc. to him in hand truly paid by James Kerr, Esq. late of Jamaica, etc. etc., doth grant, bargain, sell and confirm unto the said James Kerr Jonathan Strong, to the only proper and absolute use and behalf of the said J. Kerr, his heirs, and assigns, etc. for ever and ever, etc. Signed David Lisle." (Here follows a receipt from David Lisle for the thirty pounds paid by James Kerr.)<sup>2</sup>

Though the actual branding of slaves was probably done only abroad, branding-irons as well as slave collars, thumb-screws, and mouth-openers were displayed for sale in the shops of Liverpool as late as the beginning of the 19th century.

#### 4. CONFUSION OVER THE LEGAL POSITION OF NEGROES

Thanks to home-coming planters and the general circumstances of the slave-trade, the Negro population of Great Britain must have increased steadily through the 18th century. By 1770, in London alone, it has been estimated variously at 14,000 and 20,000, either figure being a substantial proportion of the metropolitan population of those days.<sup>3</sup> Nor is there much reason to doubt there were a fair number of Negroes living outside, more particularly in various seaport towns,<sup>4</sup> as well as on estates in the

<sup>1</sup> Communicated by the Public Librarian, Bristol.

<sup>2</sup> "Minutes of the Trial of Jonathan Strong" quoted from *Memoranda* of G. S. in the *Memoirs of Granville Sharp* by Prince Hoar, pp. 34–35.

<sup>3</sup> The population of London in 1695 has been estimated at 69,581 residents within the walls, and 53,508 residents outside the walls (excluding the Inns of Court), a total of 123,089. cf. P. E. Jones and A. V. Judges, "London Population in the late Seventeenth Century", *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, vol. 6, 1935/6, pp. 45–63. Macinnes, *op. cit.*, doubts if the total slave population in England ever rose above 15,000, or at the most 20,000 (p. 107).

<sup>4</sup> Latimer, for example, records that slaves were numerous in Bristol till the end of the 18th century.

country. At the end of the 17th century and onwards there was a considerable coming and going between the sugar Colonies and the Mother Country.

The psychological effect on the slave of this transmigration, in bringing him into a country where the "air" was relatively free, played quite a significant part in the circumstances which eventually gave rise to the Mansfield judgment of 1772. No less important psychologically, as Coupland points out, was the effect which the introduction of Negro slavery into Britain had in sharpening criticism of the slave trade itself.<sup>1</sup> Yet legally speaking, the position of the Negro in Britain in the 18th century was far more confusing than his social status. As early as the time of Elizabeth, a noted judge had declared that the air of England was too pure for a slave to breathe. Again, in the reign of Anne, Lord Chief Justice Holt affirmed that "As soon as a negro comes to England he becomes free", and about the same time Mr. Justice Powell asserted that "The law takes no notice of negroes". Yet in 1720, the lawyers, Talbot and Hardwicke, gave it as a counter opinion that the mere fact of a slave coming into these countries did not render him free, and that he could be compelled to return again to the plantations. The judgment of Hardwicke, in 1749, that a runaway slave could legally be recovered was even more decisive in this respect.

Probably the popular attitude saw nothing extraordinary in a Negro being a slave, even in England, not because he was black, but because the rights of human beings, irrespective of colour, were apt at the time to be defined rather in terms of social and economic status than of humanity. It was a period when the demand for labour in the newly-settled colonial lands was extremely urgent and even insatiable.

In the effort to cope with it all kinds of practices on the part of the settlers and their agents were condoned, which seem almost fantastic in the light of the humanitarian movement which followed so shortly afterwards, particularly when it is remembered that the kidnapping and spiriting away of children and young girls, and selling them, as well as convicts and "indentured labourers", to the Colonists in both the West Indian and the American plantations, was almost contemporary with the

<sup>1</sup> R. Coupland, *Abolition of the Slave Trade*.

anti-slavery agitation in England.<sup>1</sup> According to a Scottish writer, between the years 1740 and 1746, when the commerce in the north-east of Scotland was at its height, over 600 boys and girls were abducted and transported as slaves to the American plantations by traders.<sup>2</sup> Throughout the 18th century and, on occasion, until well on in the 19th, there are instances, also, of wives being publicly sold by their husbands in the open market.<sup>3</sup> All this, and certain elements in the cultural background of the

<sup>1</sup> cf. *inter alia*, *A Young Squire of the 17th Century*, ed. J. C. Jeaffreson, 1878. The biographical memoirs relate how the Lords of the Committee for Foreign Plantations approved of the author's petition for 300 malefactors, sentenced to serve as slaves for eight years, from the gaols of London and Middlesex. Jeaffreson, however, was warned by men of experience that he would not get a single lot unless he paid certain fees, varying from 45/- to 55/- for each malefactor, to the chief gaoler of Newgate. The greater part of such payments went into the pockets of this official and of the Recorder. Some other part went to the Keeper of the London prisons, whose prisoners had been removed into Newgate: there were gratuities to be paid out of each sum to under-gaolers and turnkeys. The chief gaoler had paid dearly for his office, and the keepers of the other London prisons had done likewise. Fees of this kind stimulated the prison keepers to take good care of the convicts.

"In like manner good came to society from a practice which encouraged the Recorder to exert himself for the conviction of scoundrels who might escape the grip of the law, if juries were not duly and cogently instructed to return verdicts of 'guilty'."

Jeaffreson tried to obtain his convicts without paying "the usual fees", but immediately encountered every kind of obstacle, and after several months of strenuous effort was obliged to compromise. He was eventually able to ship his malefactors from the Thames to the West Indies after paying prison fees for them to the amount of 45/- per head. This was just 10/- per head less than the usual sum. He obtained this small advantage only by an infinite amount of wrangling, and came to the conclusion that the game was not worth the candle.

Among those who voluntarily sold themselves as indentured servants owing to economic distress in the 18th century were many from Scotland and Ireland. Captain Hugh Crow describes how, when the unfortunate Irish peasants were being put up for sale in Charleston, South Carolina, the Negro slaves pretended that they were about to purchase them, at which the terrified Irishmen cried out: "Och! masters! Och! jewels!—don't let them blackamoors buy us at all, at all!" (cf. *Memoirs of the late Captain Hugh Crow of Liverpool*, p. 9.)

In 1936 Miss Horsburgh (later Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health) was appointed to a committee of investigation into the traffic in unwanted babies. Later she informed the House of Commons that she had examined "price lists" of children catalogued at £500 and £600. (Reported in *Daily Express*, 1943.)

<sup>2</sup> cf. G. Brodie, "When Scots were sold as Slaves", *Scots Mag.*, Dec. 1939.

<sup>3</sup> cf. W. Andrews, *Bygone England*, 1892. "It was generally believed in bygone days that in this country a husband might lawfully sell his wife to another man provided he conducted the transaction in some public place and delivered her to the purchaser with a halter about her neck. The sales were duly reported in the newspapers of the period, usually without any special comment as items of everyday news. In some instances market tolls were collected similar to those charged for animals brought to the public market."

Andrews relates that the following advertisement appeared in *The Times* for July 19th, 1797:

"By some mistake in our report of the Smithfield Market we had not learned the average price for wives for the last week," and the journal goes on:

"The increasing value of the fair sex is esteemed by several eminent writers

times, for example the festive attitude toward public executions,<sup>1</sup> suggests that the freedom of the individual was a very relative matter on occasions and frequently precarious. With popular opinion on the wider implications of the subject somewhat irregular and apparently indifferent, the fact that there was some uncertainty as to the actual law and precedent in the matter of the slavery of the Negro in Britain—a small and unprotected minority—is not surprising.

This consideration is very evident in the reasoning of Granville Sharp's dissertation "On the Injustice and Dangerous Tendency of Tolerating Negro Slavery in England", and in the necessity of his providing a suitable "test case" before satisfaction could be obtained.

Thus, the *Gentleman's Magazine*, commenting on the sale of the effects of one John Rice, in the shape of a Negro boy, for £32, offers the somewhat naive remark that this was "perhaps the first custom of the kind in a free country". Recording another and similar instance in 1771, the *Stamford Mercury* calls it likewise "a shocking instance in a free country".<sup>2</sup>

## 5. FRIENDS OF THE NEGRO

Possibly the legality of the slave status of the Negro was taken for granted rather than actually condoned. Long before 1755, when Bishop Hayter condemned the Trade from the pulpit, and Wesley shattered the complacency of the Church, there were people in England who perceived the incompatibility of Christian buying and selling Christian, even if the latter were a black man. A significant comment is that of Steele, the essayist, who wrote in the *Tatler* in 1710:

"As I am a patron of persons who have no other friend to apply to, I cannot suppress the following complaint: Sir—I am a six year-old negro boy, and have,

as a certain criterion of increasing civilization. Smithfield has, on this ground, strong pretensions to refined improvement, as the price of wives has risen in that market from half-a-guinea to three guineas and a half."

<sup>1</sup> It was a time when, as Muralt relates in his *Letters on the English Nation*, criminals passed through the streets in carts on their way to die at Tyburn, dressed in their best clothes, with white gloves and nosegays, and when cock-fights, bull-baiting, and extreme alcoholism were the main diversions of the multitude.

<sup>2</sup> *Chambers' Journal*, *ubi cit.*

by my lady's order, been christened by the chaplain. The good man has gone further with me, and told me a great deal of news; as I am as good as my lady herself, as I am a Christian, and many other things; but for all this, the parrot who came over with me from our country is as much esteemed by her as I am. Besides this, the shock dog has a collar that cost as much as mine. I desire also to know whether, now I am a Christian, I am obliged to dress like a Turke and wear a turbant. I am, sir, your most obedient servant, Pompey."<sup>1</sup>

Other literary figures of the day wrote sympathetically on or advocated tolerance of the coloured races. Mrs. Aphra Behn, who as a girl had lived in Surinam, took a Negro for the hero of her most famous novel, *Oroonoko or the Royal Slave*, which was published in 1696, and dramatised by Southerne. Defoe condemned the Slave trade and advocated kindness to Negroes in his *Life of Colonel Jacques*, as well as drawing a picture of the "noble savage" in his *Robinson Crusoe*. Pope in his *Essay on Man* (1773), Sterne in his *Tristram Shandy* (1759), and Thomas Day in a poem picturing the friendless plight of the Negro in London, were other Negrophiles. The instance of Samuel Johnson, who shocked the men of Oxford by proposing as a toast—"Here's to the next insurrection of the negroes in the West Indies," is even better known.<sup>2</sup>

## 6. THE NEGRO'S BID FOR FREEDOM

Steele's complaint was symbolic of a situation which was developing fast amongst the slaves and giving rise to a great deal of uneasiness amongst the West Indian planting class, both in England and in the Colonies. The slaves newly arrived in England were quick to learn that the law respecting them was by no means precisely defined. Some of them tried the experiment of running away from their masters, and the idea soon spread, encouraged by English sympathisers, the Quakers in particular, that the procedure of seizing and holding them by force was not sanctioned by English law. Possibly, too, the mere psychological effect of seeing white people in a similar servile capacity to themselves was significant in altering their attitudes towards their masters, as it has proved in the case of coloured people at the present day.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in *All the Year Round*, *ubi cit.* This passage seems to suggest that Christianity rather than race or nationality was still looked upon as the main criterion of group loyalty and inclusiveness.

<sup>2</sup> Coupland, *op. cit.*



The idea was also strongly held that all persons who were baptized became thereby free,<sup>1</sup> and in consequence the Negroes made every effort to be baptized as soon as they landed, and to obtain English people as godfathers and as witnesses of their baptism in the hope that these would plead their cause, and resist any forcible attempt to send them out of the kingdom.

The news spread no less quickly through the West Indies. Negroes there, who were slaves on the plantations, importuned or bribed seamen to smuggle them on board English-going craft so that they might win their freedom in Britain. The numerous advertisements in the newspapers of the period regarding runaway slaves and the rewards offered for them testify to this situation. The planters and others concerned were in a dilemma. Unwilling on the one hand to lose their slaves and so allow an awkward precedent to become established, they were afraid on the other to run the risk of taking them back by force, and thus possibly incurring the unfavourable decision of a public tribunal. The matter was solved for a time, however, by Talbot and Hardwicke in the decision already referred to, to which these lawyers added that even the rite of baptism did not free the Negro slave—it could affect only his spiritual, not his temporal condition. Heartened by this opinion, the merchants and planters took every step to publicize it, and adopted all possible means to make it effective. The London newspapers abounded with advertisements of slaves who had absconded, with descriptions of their persons and offers of rewards for their apprehension. To all intents and purposes the runaway became an “unprotected person”, at the mercy of the planters’ agents, and liable to be decoyed and seized by any enterprising person, even in the open street, and sold off to the captain of a West Indiaman.<sup>2</sup> The earning of such rewards became one of the disreputable professions of riverside London, and in some cases the runaway Negro only added to his predicament, since as the

<sup>1</sup> The hostility shown by many West Indian slave-owners to missionary activity amongst their slaves was probably prompted more by fear of the latter acquiring some education and becoming more difficult to handle than by the complications arising out of the treatment of a fellow Christian.

<sup>2</sup> M. Dorothy George, *London Life in the 18th Century*, cf. “Immigrants and Emigrants,” pp. 133–40.

Nor, according to Latimer (*op. cit.*) was the apprehension of runaways left entirely to private individuals. In 1725, the postmaster of Bristol was the agent employed to recapture a slave living in Bristol, and this fact was published in the official organ of the Government.

price of his freedom he was obliged to hide himself away to starve in some riverside parish.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Negroes appeared from time to time at the Old Bailey, charged with petty theft. In 1780, one was tried as a Gordon rioter. The well-known London magistrate, Sir John Fielding, protested against the practice of bringing them over from the West Indies. In his words one catches an echo, not only of the attitudes of the property-owning classes of those days, but of a number of contemporary opinions on the colour question:<sup>1</sup>

"The immense confusion that has arose in the families of merchants and other gentlemen who have estates in the West Indies from the great numbers of Negro slaves they have brought into this Kingdom . . . deserves the most serious attention. Many of these gentlemen have either at a vast expense caused some of their blacks to be instructed in the necessary qualifications of a domestic servant or have purchased them after they have been instructed; they then bring them to England as cheap servants having no right to wages; they no sooner arrive here than they put themselves on a footing with other servants, become intoxicated with liberty, grow refractory, and either by persuasion of others or from their own inclinations, begin to expect wages according to their own opinion of their merits; and as there are already a great number of black men and women who have made themselves so troublesome and dangerous to the families who have brought them over as to get themselves discharged, these enter into societies and make it their business to corrupt and dissatisfy the mind of every black servant that comes to England; first by getting them christened or married, which, they inform them, makes them free . . . though it has been decided otherwise by the judges. However it so far answers their purpose that it gets the mob on their side and makes it not only difficult but dangerous . . . to recover possession of them, when once they are spirited away; and indeed, it is the less evil of the two to let them go about their business, for there is great reason that those blacks who have been sent back to the Plantations . . . have been the occasion of those . . . recent insurrections in the . . . West Indies. It is a species of inhumanity to the blacks themselves, to bring them to a free country."<sup>2</sup>

## 7. THE LEGAL BATTLE FOR EMANCIPATION BEGINS

The "difficulties and dangers" of recovering possession of absconding black servants increased considerably when Granville Sharp and his friends began to take an embarrassing interest in the matter in 1766. But even before that date distressed Negroes were often treated with sympathy in the Courts, as is

<sup>1</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by George, *op. cit.*

to be seen from the records of the Middlesex Sessions. As early as 1690, Katharine Auker, a black, petitioned to be discharged from her master as he was in Barbados. She said she had been brought to England about six years before by Robert Rich, a planter. She was baptized at St. Katharine's by the Tower, and after that her master and mistress "tortured her and turned her out", and her said master refusing to give her a discharge, "she could not be entertained in service elsewhere".<sup>1</sup>

More fundamental issues were raised by the case of John Caesar, whose wife petitioned the Sessions in 1717. Her husband, she said, had served Benjamin and John Wood, who were printers and embossers in Whitechapel, as a slave without wages for fourteen years. They had very much abused the said John with very hard usage and for the greatest part of the time had imprisoned him in their dwelling-house. Seven years ago he had been baptized, nevertheless he was still detained as a slave, though "as the petitioner is advised, slavery is inconsistent with the laws of this realm". She herself was very poor and destitute, and likely to become chargeable to the parish unless her husband was released from his slavery and confinement, and so enabled to provide for himself and the petitioner. The Court recommended the master to come to some reasonable agreement with regard to wages, and as the recommendation was not acted upon, at the next sessions certain justices were ordered to consider what wages ought to be allowed to Caesar.<sup>2</sup>

Difficulties of this kind seem sometimes to have induced the the owners of slaves to enter into indentures with them, and so secure a property in their labour by a contract recognized in English courts, and not open to doubtful construction. This at all events seems to be the explanation of certain advertisementst such as the following:

"Run away on Wednesday, the 28th ult., and stole money and goods from his master, John Lamb, Esq., an indentured black servant man, named William, of a brown or tawny complexion."

There is also mention of a "black" as an apprentice boy,<sup>3</sup> apparently as free as other apprentices, which is perhaps not saying very much. Anthony Emmanuel had been bound, in 1723, to one Samuel Johnson with the consent of his then mistress. Two years later his master petitioned for his discharge, as notwithstanding

<sup>1</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

his kindness the apprentice ran away, embezzled money, and remained incorrigible in spite of having been put in the House of Correction.<sup>1</sup>

In 1731, the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London passed an ordinance forbidding the teaching of trades to Negroes.<sup>2</sup> Possibly this suggests that the merchants were becoming nervous of the growing degree of independence on the part of the Negroes, many of whom by this time were either actually or virtually free. Among the latter should be numbered Dr. Johnson's servant, Francis Barber, of whom there is frequent mention in Boswell. Johnson himself had always been a zealous opponent of slavery in any form. Boswell, however, was of the opinion "with all deference that, in suchwise, he discovered a zeal without discretion"; and that the attempts then being made to "abolish so very necessary and important a branch of commercial interest" as the traffic in Negroes were "wild and dangerous".<sup>3</sup> Perhaps Johnson received Francis Barber into his service out of sympathy and charity with an oppressed race, but it is plain that he regarded him as his property, if not exactly as his slave. On one occasion, Barber, tiring perhaps of the Doctor's platitudes, ran away to sea, whereupon Johnson wrote to the Admiralty and procured the boy's discharge.<sup>4</sup>

## 8. GRANVILLE SHARP TAKES A HAND

In the meantime, owing very largely to the energy and persistence of Granville Sharp, a series of cases contesting the

<sup>1</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> Rogers, *op. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> *All the Year Round*, *ubi cit.*

<sup>4</sup> Francis Barber was born in Jamaica, and was brought to England in 1750 by a Colonel Bathurst, father of Johnson's very intimate friend, Dr. Bathurst. The Colonel by his will left him his freedom, and Dr. Bathurst was willing that he should enter into Johnson's service. (cf. Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, ed. A. Glover, footnote to p. 151.) Johnson always showed the keenest interest in the advancement of the Negro boy. He placed him in a school at Northampton, and in 1770 he wrote to Barber, who at that date could not have been less than forty years of age—"I am very well satisfied with your progress, if you really perform the exercises which you are set. Let me know what English books you read for your entertainment. You can never be wise unless you love reading. Do not imagine that I shall forget or forsake you: for if, when I examine you, I find that you have not lost your time, you shall want no encouragement. From yours affectionately, Sam Johnson." Barber remained with him until Johnson's death in 1784, and benefited considerably under his will (*All the Year Round*, *ubi cit.*).

right of persons to own Negro slaves was being fought out in the English courts. The first concerned a Negro by the name of Jonathan Strong, who had been brought to England by his master, David Lisle, a lawyer. Lisle attempted to kidnap the Negro some time after turning him adrift destitute in the London streets, but Sharp secured his release from the Poultry Compter (a well-known prison) on a technical point.<sup>1</sup>

It was this incident, possibly, which gave the final stimulus to Sharp's interest in the question of Negro slavery, and confirmed his determination to see the matter through. He realized, however, that to make any headway it would be necessary to sort out the tangled mass of legal precedent on the subject. He applied to many lawyers for their opinion, amongst others to the celebrated Judge Blackstone, but obtained small satisfaction. The Talbot opinion had been made so extensively known, and the financial implications respecting the property in slaves were so obvious that few cared to consider the difficulties of refutation. Sharp saw that there was no alternative to a full legal research into the matter, and the result was the publication, a few years later, of the historic tract to which reference has already been made.<sup>2</sup>

Sharp clarified this "dangerous tendency" in a number of ingenious legal and economic arguments. If, he argued, it was once permitted to retain Negroes in England as slaves by enforcing the ancient laws of villeinage, then the foundation would be laid in their posterity, i.e., mulattoes, for a most dangerous vassalage in which the poorer members even of the original English people might be involved. Surely masters could already obtain servants in England at a low enough rate of wage? Work-people in England were already living and working on the barest level of subsistence, whereas the upkeep of a slave would cost as much as the wages of an English labourer, and even more, since the latter generally provided for themselves and that voluntarily

<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed account of this incident, in which Sharp appears to have acted with considerable initiative and presence of mind, see Prince Hoar, *Memoirs of Granville Sharp*, and Copley, *History of Slavery*.

<sup>2</sup> *op. cit.*; cf. also E. C. P. Lascelles, *Granville Sharp and the Freedom of Slaves*.

"In this work (Granville Sharp) clearly refutes the long established opinion, producing against it the decision of Lord Justice Holt, many years before, that a slave on coming to England became free. He also refuted it from the ancient law of villeinage in England, and by the axiom of the British constitution "that every man in England is free to sue for and defend his rights, and that force cannot be used without a legal process."

at a cheaper rate of maintenance. If a master could obtain the services of an apprentice, who would work for 6 or 7 years or more without any wages at all, why should he incur the expense and trouble of bringing slaves over to this country? Not only was there the prime cost of the slave, but the cost of transporting him, and apothecaries' and surgeons' bills should he fall sick or meet with an accident. Besides, if the law condoned the kidnapping of Negroes, the next step would be to connive at the kidnapping of white men.<sup>1</sup> Sharp's tract was widely distributed, especially amongst lawyers. It provoked a lively interest in the matter, and prepared the judges for the final issue.

A number of Negroes were rescued in the Courts,<sup>1</sup> but on some technical point, and it was some time before Sharp had an opportunity of putting the issue to the real test. There was evidence that popular feeling on the matter was stirring.<sup>2</sup> The lawyers, on the other hand, seemed far more disposed to let sleeping dogs lie; mainly, perhaps, because the vested interests of the slave-owners were very great.

"There were at least 14,000 Negroes in the country, many of them brought over on the strength of the well-known opinion of the Law Officers and the decision of the King's Bench. Putting them only at £50 each, the masters would lose £700,000 if Granville proved right, and it was a terrible thought that the loss would be due to the mistake of English Lawyers and English

<sup>1</sup> The full list of slaves rescued in England by Sharp is as follows:

Jonathan Strong . . . . .	Saved from the Poultry Compter.
Thomas Lewis . . . . .	Saved from a ship in the Downs.
John Thomas . . . . .	Who afterwards went to China.
Another John Thomas . . . .	Brought by a clergyman's widow.
An Indian.	
James Somerset . . . . .	In whose case Lord Mansfield gave a just and decisive judgment.
Two Negroes from the Havannah .	Demanding and saved from an English ship in the river Thames: one of whom was a free man of Antigua, who escaped from prison at the Havannah: both his feet were mortified with the cold on board the English ship, so that when G. S. sent him to St. Bartholomew's hospital, they were obliged to amputate both legs near to the knee.
Another Negro, son of an eminent slave-dealer at Sierra Leone, and an acquaintance of young Naimbanna (the King's son).	Saved from a ship in the Downs, with nearly the same extraordinary circumstances as in the case of T. Lewis.
John Cambridge . . . . .	Defended against Captain Holman.

(Quoted from Sharp's own memoranda, footnote to page 248, *The Memoirs*, *op. cit.*)

<sup>2</sup> At the Lewis trial, for example, there was a general cry from the jury of "No property, no property". (*Lascelles, op. cit.*)

Courts, and that a mere layman had put them right. Besides, there would be the possibility of action for damages by every slave who had been punished by his master, and claim for wages ever since they had been brought to England.”<sup>1</sup>

The words of the Chief Justice, Lord Mansfield, in summing up one of these cases, bespeak his obvious aversion to any disturbance of the *status quo*, and offer a paternalistic, if naive, solution to the problem:

I don't know what the consequences may be, if the masters were to lose their property by accidentally bringing their slaves to England. I hope it will never be finally discussed; for I would have all masters think them free, and all Negroes think they were not, because they would both behave better.<sup>2</sup>

Sharp's opportunity came at last in 1772. A slave, James Somersett, was brought by his master to England in 1769. He escaped, was recaptured, and eventually rescued from on board the ship which was to have returned him to Jamaica. This time there was no dispute as to the master's claim, and no loophole for legal ingenuity. Sharp prepared his case with the greatest care, but there was some delay, as Mansfield adjourned the case twice, and threw out a broad hint to Somersett's owner that even at this stage the difficulty might be obviated by setting the slave free. But the owner, a Mr. Knowles, was apparently quite regardless of the inconvenience which his obdurate attitude was about to cause both to Lord Mansfield and to thousands of slave owners in the country. Seeing that it was no longer possible to defer a decision, the Lord Chief Justice finally came to judgment after a further and somewhat apologetic hint to the merchant class that their last remaining hope lay in an appeal to Parliament.

“We pay all due attention to the opinion of sir Phillip Yorke, and lord chancellor Talbot, whereby they pledged themselves to the British planters, for all the legal consequences of slaves coming to this Kingdom or being baptized, recognized by lord Hardwicke, sitting as chancellor on the 19th October 1749, that trover would lie; that a notion had prevailed, if a negro came over, or became a Christian, he was emancipated but no ground in law; that he and lord Talbot, when attorney and solicitor general, were of opinion, that no such claim for freedom was valid. . . . We are so well agreed, that we think there is no occasion for having it argued (as I intimated an intention at first), before all the judges, as is usual, for obvious reasons, on a return to a

<sup>1</sup> Lascelles, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> *Minutes of the Trial of Thos. Lewis at the Court of the King's Bench*, 20th Feb., 1771.

Some measure of the influence exercised in domestic affairs by the planters is seen, perhaps, in the estimate that during the eighteenth century absentee proprietors of sugar plantations in the West Indies spent about four million pounds sterling annually in Britain (cf. J. S. Marais, *The Cape Coloured People*, Longmans, Green & Co., 1939, p. 187).

Habeas Corpus. The only question before us is whether the cause on the return is sufficient? If it is, the negro must be remanded; if it is not, he must be discharged. Accordingly, the return states, that the slave departed and refused to serve; whereupon he was kept, to be sold abroad. So high an act of dominion must be recognized by the law of the kingdom where it is used. The power of a master over his slave has been extremely different, in different countries. The state of slavery is of such a nature, that it is incapable of being introduced on any reasons, moral or political, but only by positive law, which preserves its force long after the reasons, occasion, and time itself from which it was created, is erased from memory. It is so odious, that nothing can be suffered to support it, but positive law. Whatever inconveniences, therefore, may follow from the decision, I cannot say this case is allowed or approved by the law of England; and therefore the black must be discharged."<sup>1</sup>

## 9. THE AFTERMATH OF NEGRO "EMANCIPATION"

There were various repercussions of the *Somerset* case, notably in 1776 when a Negro boy, who had been shipped from England and forced to serve as a slave, successfully sued for his liberty and his pay.<sup>2</sup> Not unnaturally, the *Mansfield* judgment found no favour with the planting and commercial class, although it did not immediately and directly concern those whose business was merely with exporting slaves from Africa to the West Indies.<sup>3</sup> The business men were unsuccessful, however, in their attempt to promote a Bill in the next session of Parliament in 1773 for the toleration of slavery, i.e. the securing of property in Negroes and other slaves in this kingdom.<sup>4</sup>

Thenceforward Negro slavery was not recognized in England.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> State Trials, 1771—1777, p. 82. This decision is alluded to in the often-quoted lines of Cowper:

"Slaves cannot breathe in England: if their lungs  
Imbibe our air, that moment they are free.  
They touch our country, and their shackles fall. . . ."

Macinnes (*op. cit.*) considers that the *Mansfield* judgment may be regarded as the beginning of the abolitionist movement.

A writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1772, vol. 42, asked the rather inconvenient question if there was

"any Act of Parliament or clause of an Act of Parliament that has fixed and described the zones or climates wherein property in Negroes may be had, or where it may not be had?"

<sup>2</sup> Copley, *op. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> "A Planter" wrote: "The planters of course have been left as much puzzled by this Delphic Ambiguity, as the sages themselves appear to have been, in forming their judgments upon the subject. The matter having been confounded in this grand uncertainty." (Hoar, *op. cit.*)

<sup>4</sup> Lascelles, *op. cit.*

<sup>5</sup> The *Somerset* judgment covered Ireland also. According to Coupland (*op. cit.*), the Scottish judges delivered a similar decision in 1778 in the case of Joseph Knight.



It is probable, nevertheless, that usages similar to slavery did not immediately disappear. For some years after the Somersett case, there are records of "slaves" coming into this country with their masters, or being sold and shipped out. As late as December 8th, 1792, according to Latimer, a Bristol journal reported that a wealthy citizen had just sold a "black servant girl, who had been many years in his service", into perpetual bondage.<sup>1</sup> There is a later report, also, of a slave, John Wise of St. Vincent, accompanying his master to Bath, where he was manumitted, and settled with £20 in consideration of long and faithful service to a doctor. The same man continued in service at Bath, and later shipped on a brig as a steward at £4 15s. per month wages.<sup>2</sup>

Though it altered and secured their legal position, the Somersett case probably made little difference to the occupations, and even to the social status, of the majority of Negroes in this country. A large number of them appear to have remained with their former masters as paid servants. Some hundreds, however, took themselves off and prepared to live as free men. They had little skilled ability and few trades at their disposal, and not a few of them found it impossible to obtain employment. A number seem to have regarded freedom as including immunity from work.<sup>3</sup> In 1783, the number of derelict Negroes in the London parishes was increased as a result of peace with the American Colonies. Those who had been serving with the British forces overseas were sent, some to Nova Scotia, some to the Bahamas, and the rest to London, where they, too, quickly fell into distress. Negroes became conspicuous among London beggars, and were known as St. Giles' Blackbirds.<sup>4</sup> Granville Sharp, whose philanthropy had already marked him out as the friend of all Negroes in trouble, was soon surrounded by a host of needy pensioners.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The price of the woman, who was shipped to Jamaica, was £80 colonial currency. When she "put her feet into the fatal boat at Lamplighters' Hall, her tears ran down her face like a shower of rain." (Latimer, *op. cit.*) The following advertisement also appeared in a Liverpool newspaper, Oct. 15th, 1779—To be sold by auction at George Dunbar's office, on Thursday next, the 21st inst., at one o'clock, *a Black Boy, aged about fourteen years old, and a large Mountain Tiger Cat* (Hoar, *op. cit.*, p. 93).

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the African Institution*, 1807.

<sup>3</sup> George, *op. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Hoar, *op. cit.*, *Obituary notice of Granville Sharp*. "Mr. Granville Sharp was occupied in humanely trying to remedy an inconvenience which had grown out of his own benevolent exertions on behalf of the African slaves. . . . The Negroes, therefore, who had been brought to England, being locked up, as it were, in London, and having now no master to support them (many of them unaccustomed to any useful handicraft

## 10 THE SIERRA LEONE SOLUTION

The Poor Law Authorities regarded this new class of the "poor" without enthusiasm, and although a committee for the Relief of the Black Poor was formed under the chairmanship of Jonas Hanway (famous for his endeavours on behalf of the climbing-boys), it soon found itself in the same difficulty as Sharp.<sup>1</sup> In their dilemma, Sharp and other philanthropists, not to mention the Poor Law Authorities, were only too pleased when a Mr. Smeatham, a naturalist with some knowledge of West Africa, came forward with a scheme for the settlement of the Negroes on a piece of land at Sierra Leone. This was in 1786. Posters were set up in the London streets, and applications were immediately invited from those who were "desirous of settling in one of the most fertile and pleasant countries in the known world". In its anxiety to rid the country of the indigent Negroes, the Government offered to provide transport by sea, and £12 per head for subsistence.<sup>2</sup> Some seven hundred Negroes presented themselves, and eventually 411 would-be settlers, many of them "men of ardent passions, whose only lessons had been stripes, and whom experience had instructed to start with dread from their fellow-creatures", set sail to found the colony which was to become known as Freetown.<sup>2</sup> By a convenient arrangement, and as a means of getting rid of a further section of the unwanted, some sixty white prostitutes were shipped along with them in the same transport. This aspect of the scheme was no doing of Sharp; but removal of prostitutes to the Colonies was a favourite method of the age for reforming and providing for such women. It appears that the women were actually decoyed on board. One of them explained that she had been taken with others of her kind by prospective customers to Wapping, plied with drink, taken on board and "married" to a Negro. She had

or calling), and having besides no parish which they could call their own, fell by degrees into great distress, so that they were alarmingly conspicuous throughout the streets as beggars. As Mr. Sharp was their known patron, they had all flocked to him. in their turn, for support: he had considered them as orphans who had some title to his care: he had occasionally relieved them. But their number being great (about four hundred), he found that he could not relieve them daily, consistently with his engagements to others. . . ."

<sup>1</sup> cf. George, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Hoar, *op. cit.*, p. 261.

been too drunk to remember anything that had happened the night before, and was obliged the following morning to enquire who her husband was.<sup>1</sup>

Other Negroes went out to the West Indies, where they worked as free labourers; but "blacks" continued to be conspicuous among London beggars, and in 1814 a Parliamentary Committee reported that there were many Negroes in London whose condition deserved the attention of the House of Commons.<sup>2</sup>

## II. OTHER COLOURED AND ASIATIC INHABITANTS

It was about this time that another kind of coloured population first began to be noticeable in England, more particularly in London. These were Lascars from the East Indies, and Chinese seamen, who throughout the nineteenth, and to an increasing extent in the present, century, have played an important part in the manning of British merchant vessels. These men were brought over in East India Company ships, and on arrival in the Thames were discharged, and left in London for some months before shipment on the return voyage. In several respects they were at a disadvantage compared even with the Negroes. Ignorant of England and of English ways, they were exploited by each other, and by the worst products of the riverside slums of Wapping, Shadwell, and Poplar. Some of them found their way as beggars to the west end of London, and shelter in the common lodging houses of St. Giles.<sup>3</sup> There was a controversy

<sup>1</sup> cf. C. Bready. *Life and Times of John Wesley*, and George, *op. cit.* The whole affair seems to have been managed badly and even unscrupulously. Olandah Equiano (or Gustavus Vassa), an "anglicized" Negro from the West Coast, relates in his autobiography how he was appointed by the Sierra Leone committee as commissary of provisions and stores for the Black Poor. The Government had ordered all necessities for 750 persons to be provided, but they were never bought. The passengers were also deprived of beds, etc. He informed the Commissioners of the Navy regarding the fraudulent behaviour of their agent, but his own dismissal was procured by some one in the city, who also secured passages for certain people who were not entitled to them. Equiano sent in a bill for expenses of £32 4s.—and wages owing to him, and received £50 some months later, i.e. £18 for four months' service, which, it is clear, he thought scarcely a fair remuneration. (cf. *The Life of Olandah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa*, written by himself.)

<sup>2</sup> George, *op. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> The missionary attitude towards them was that they were utterly depraved and in a pitiful condition. "They are practically and abominably used. They are a prey to each other, and to the rapacious poor, as well as the most abandoned of our fellow-

with the Directors of the East India Company as to who should be responsible for their maintenance, and during it the Lascars became completely destitute. Their miseries did not attract public attention until 1814. Attempts were made to teach them English and to convert them to Christianity. In 1814, an Act was passed compelling the Company to provide food, clothing, and other necessary accommodation for Asiatic sailors, and a Parliamentary Committee was appointed to consider the Act, and report what future regulations were necessary.

The Committee made a surprise visit to the barracks where the Lascars were housed. They reported that at certain times of the year these received from 1,000 to 1,100 men, which meant great overcrowding. Even when not overcrowded they were very dirty, there was no bedding or furniture, no fireplaces, and the men had only a blanket apiece. There was no accommodation for the sick.<sup>1</sup> This seems to have been the first attempt of the Government to exercise any sort of control over housing conditions, and the cellars of St. Giles were probably far worse than the barracks of the Lascars. The Lascars, however, were an imperial obligation, and the Government's relations with the East India Company gave it a basis for action.

## 12. THE FIRST COLOURED "STUDENTS" COME TO BRITAIN

After the "liberation" of the slaves in this country, historical references to Negroes in England in the succeeding century are very few. Before passing on, however, it is necessary to mention briefly another class of Negro in 18th-century England, whose presence was significant, though they were much fewer in number. These were the sons of chiefs and notables of African

countrymen. They have none or scarcely any who will associate with them but prostitutes and no house that will receive them except the public house and the apartments of the abandoned. They are strangers in a strange land and demand our hospitality." In 1814, and previously, the number coming annually to England was about 2,500, and it was expected that for the future the number would be doubled. In 1810, it was estimated that about 130 died yearly. The East India Company quartered them in barracks in Ratcliffe Highway, paying in 1814, ten shillings a week for their board and lodging to a contractor. (cf., George, *op. cit.*)

<sup>1</sup> It was said that if beds were provided, the lascars sold them, and that there were stoves in winter. The buildings for Chinese were also inspected, at a time when there were few in London, though on the arrival of the China ships there were a great many. These places were much more clean and airy than the barracks of the lascars (George, *op. cit.*).

tribes in the neighbourhood of British mercantile settlements on the African Coast. The earliest record of their arrival is at the beginning of the 18th century.<sup>1</sup> Some of them were sent over by missionaries to be educated,<sup>2</sup> but most came at the expense of the traders, more particularly the Africa Company, or were protégés of the commanders of ships.

Every encouragement was given to this practice by the merchants concerned: it secured hostages for their own security, and smoothed the way to more friendly business relations with their Coastal clients.<sup>3</sup> In 1788, it is said, there were about fifty mulattoes and Negro children in London and the neighbourhood

<sup>1</sup> Robert Davis, a person of mixed blood, went to England for education in 1710, and contracted to serve with the African Company for five years at any station as an interpreter. (cf. H. A. Wyndham, *The Atlantic and Slavery*, O.U.P., 1935.)

<sup>2</sup> cf. Wyndham, *op. cit.* "In 1710, the Rev. John Jameson, who was travelling as the chaplain of a ship, observed 'the dismal state of religion' at Cape Coast Castle, and expressed the opinion that a well qualified school would instil good principle into the young mulattos, and even some of the Blacks, and would thereby serve the (African) Company's interests." The sons of prominent caboceers were sent to England for the purpose. Later, in 1751, a clergyman sent by the S.P.G. to the Gold Coast as chaplain for four years at Cape Coast Castle, sent home three native boys to be educated in a school at Islington. One of these youths, named Quaque, studied for Holy Orders, and after ordination at Oxford, returned to be chaplain at Cape Coast Castle for more than fifty years, 'but without producing any good effect'. Apparently he retained 'some confidence in the power of the fetish to the last, and mixed his former superstition with the gospel' (cf. *The African Cry*, 1842, pp. 91-2).

During his career, the Rev. Quaque had charge, also, of an early attempt on the Gold Coast to educate the mulatto population around the forts under the auspices of the Torridzonian Society. Though the subjects of education were "the first rudiments of the Christian religion, reading and writing", the clothing of the scholars seems to have been planned in far greater detail than the curriculum. It comprised a uniform and badge which would outvie the uniform of a modern public school, a blue jacket with red cuffs and cape, trousers, black cravat and hat, and on the jacket a badge "T.Z.S." (cf. E. C. Martin, "Early Educational Experiments on the Gold Coast", *J.A.S.*, 23, 1923/4, pp. 294-98).

<sup>3</sup> cf. *Memoirs of Captain Crow*, p. 300. Note also Wyndham, *op. cit.*, chapter 3. "Trading on the Coast;" in particular, pp. 59-67. "The trading, which was the main object of Western enterprise in Africa, depended upon the good will of the coastal chiefs; nor were the Europeans able to rely on force to secure it."

They were at the mercy of local chiefs and their agents and representatives. "The King of Barsally treated the whites no better than he did his own subjects. He took possession of an English factor's bed, got drunk on his brandy, and held him down while his pockets were searched for the storehouse key. One of the King's brothers spouted water from his mouth into the factor's face. The Royal African Company of England was content to instruct its agents 'to endeavour to live in all friendship with them', or 'to hold frequent palavers with the Kings and the Great Men of the Country, and keep up a good correspondence with them, ingratiating yourself by such prudent methods as may neither lessen your own nor their character.' Masters of vessels were warned 'never wilfully to wrong or abuse any of the Natives, and if any differences happen, to endeavour an amicable accommodation rather than use force.' The Act of Parliament constituting the Company of Merchants trading in Africa imposed a penalty of £100 on masters of vessels who committed acts of violence. The Company was always ready to put the blame for any disputes on to the Europeans. Its attitude was that 'as no remedy can be applied to prevent the ill behaviour of the

under instruction, and that number was exceeded at an earlier date.<sup>1</sup> Education seems to have been confined to reading, writing and a little arithmetic, and was possibly rather secondary to the main object, from the Company's standpoint, of fostering friendly relations and further opportunities for business. The protégés were treated with considerable deference, and much trouble and expense were spent in entertaining them and making them feel at home.<sup>2</sup> Students continued to arrive, but by the end of the

Natives without running the risk of a quarrel, we depend entirely upon your conduct to use such methods as shall be thought most prudent in any conjunctions that may happen.' Where no means of retaliation were available, it was useless to recommend them.

"Factors, agents, or supercargoes, who were 'too hasty and passionate' had to be removed if the Natives refused to trade with them, or to sell them supplies."

<sup>1</sup> Crow, *op. cit.*, p. 299.

<sup>2</sup> In a letter to the Governor of the Gold Coast (1753), the African Committee in London wrote that: "The Hostages brought over by Captain Cockburn and Anima's son who came here with that Gentleman, we shall educate properly, and if possible, by our Behaviour, secure them warmly in our Interest." Some of the articles ordered and accounts rendered testify to the sincerity of the Committee's professions.

"12 Ruffled shirts, 1 Blue Coat and Breeches for each lined with Silver, and Silver Buttons

1 Scarlet Cloth Waistcoat for each trimmed with silver

2 Frocks and Breeches

2 Scarlet worsted Waistcoats

2 Silver laced Hats

2 Bag Wigs

8 Pairs of White Stockings

4 Pairs of worsted Stockings

8 Pairs of Pumps

2 Pairs of strong Shoes

2 Pairs of Silver Buckles."

There are also the following accounts:

"Capt. George Cockburn account up to July 22nd, 1754 . . .	£79 : 4 : 1
Rev. Mr. John Moore, Board, Schooling and necessities . . .	£40 : 8 : 6
Mr. Richard Walters, for Board, Nursing, etc. . . . .	£17 : 11 : -
Mr. Thomas Thornley, Apothecary, for Physick for Mr. Sackee in the Small Pox . . . . .	£ 2 : 4 : 2
Mr. Thomas Thornley's Bill for Doctor's Fees and Physick for Mr. Aqua in the Small Pox . . . . .	£18 : 5 : 8
Mr. Peregrine Custs' for two suits of clothes for the Two Gentlemen . . . . . " etc.	£14 : 10 : -

(cf. "Negroes in England in the Eighteenth Century," *Notes and Queries*, 10th March, 1928, Maj. J. J. Crookes, pp. 173-4.)

The "Two Black Gentlemen" were eventually despatched home, and drove down to Plymouth in the same coach as the wife of the captain of the ship. Their berths cost the Company of Merchants Trading to Africa £50. Other bills for their expenses at Plymouth before the ship sailed for diet and for "check shirts" came to £30; but the Company refused to be responsible for two bureaux, which the "two blacke gentlemen had bespoke", and which the captain refused to put on board. The Company found it necessary to apologize for the embarrassments the two had caused him and agreed with him that they should not be allowed any wines at Madeira. Finally, the Governor of Cape Coast Castle was informed that the cost of educating them, and sending them back to Africa, had amounted to over £600, and he was instructed to send the Company no more black gentlemen unless he found it absolutely necessary for the benefit of the trade. (cf. Wyndham, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-33.)

century the motivation had become philanthropic rather than commercial and arose largely from the Sierra Leone enterprise and expedition. One benevolent result was the formation, in 1801, of a Society for the education of Africans.

### 13. YOUNG NAIMBANNA

The Temne paramount chief, Naimbanna, who had shown himself very friendly towards the settlement, was strongly impressed by the advantages of a European education, and decided to secure them for his sons. One of them he sent to France for instruction, and the eldest he consigned to Mr. Falconbridge, the Sierra Leone Company's agent. The party reached England in 1791, and the young man was first received and entertained in the house of Henry Thornton, afterwards Governor of the Bank, and then entrusted, at the latter's suggestion, for educational purposes to a clergyman in Kent. Young Naimbanna was baptized by the name of Henry Granville, after the Christian names of his sponsors, Thornton and Sharp. He worked hard, and was given an excellent report by the two clerical tutors, who successively supervised his studies and conduct.<sup>1</sup> In the second year of his education, news of the death of his father prompted young Naimbanna to return home, but he died of fever within a few hours of landing at Sierra Leone.

The experiment, however, was continued. It was hoped that the education in England of the African chiefs would help in cementing a friendly union between the people of Britain and "the European colony of freedom", and that as a result, the returning students would play their part in introducing the

<sup>1</sup> cf. Hoar, *op. cit.*, pp. 365-70. "A desire of knowledge was the predominant feature in his character; he would continually urge his instructors to prolong the time of their reading together. He was forward in declaring his obligations to every one who would assist him in the acquisition of useful learning: he would express regret if he had been led into company anywhere the time had passed away without improvement; and when it happened that he was left entirely to himself, he would employ not less than eight or ten hours of the day in reading. Though the disadvantages arising from the long neglect of his mental faculties were apparent, he showed signs of a very good natural sense; he had also a faculty at distinguishing characters; and, his mind, as might naturally be expected, was ready to receive impressions from those persons of whom he had conceived a good opinion. He had few advantages of person, but he was uncommonly pleasing in his behaviour, showing much natural courtesy and even delicacy of manners: he was also of a kind and affectionate disposition" (*ibid.* Report, 1794).

"improvements of science, and the comforts of civilization into Africa", as well as taking an appropriate share in the development of the colony. A further batch of young Africans, selected from the schools of the colony, sailed from Freetown in 1799. It consisted of 21 boys, mainly the sons of local chiefs, and 4 girls, and was conducted by Zachary Macaulay, Governor of the Colony.<sup>1</sup> A desire to enable Africans themselves to qualify as schoolmasters led the African Institution, a few years later, to offer free board and lodging at the Royal Free School in Southwark for two Africans. Two young men, liberated from slave ships, duly arrived in 1811 and made progress in literacy beyond the expectations of their sponsors.<sup>2</sup>

#### 14. THE 19TH CENTURY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF COLONIAL CONTACTS

A certain amount of conjecture is necessary as to the fortunes of the Negroes left behind in England after the Sierra Leone expedition. Many of them no doubt married and were assimilated in the British population. During the earlier decades of the succeeding century, at any rate, it is evident that they fulfilled a regular function as coachmen and footmen in the houses of the wealthy,<sup>3</sup> and possibly the humble nature of this and the like rôles accounts for their subsequent historical anonymity. They had a recognized position, also, as Army bandsmen. Wearing an embroidered Oriental dress, they played the cymbals in the band of the Grenadier or Coldstream Guards—

<sup>1</sup> Lascelles, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> *Sixth Report of the Directors of the African Institution.* Susoo youths brought over to England in 1808 assisted a missionary to draw up a Susoo grammar and vocabulary. Another interesting coloured visitor to England about the same date was Captain Paul Cuffee, whose brig, which he owned himself and navigated with the help of eight other men of colour, was consigned to Messrs. W. & R. Rathbone of Liverpool in 1811. Cuffee, born in 1759, in one of the Elizabeth Isles, was the son of an African slave. Solely by diligence and personal initiative he became a successful trader and was consulted by the African Institution as to the best means of carrying out their benevolent projects in Africa. (cf. Crow, *op. cit.*, p. 304-5.)

<sup>3</sup> "The negro coachman, a very portly person, with powder over his woolly pate; the negro footman, in a brilliant livery, stately of port and stalwart of body, if somewhat unshapely as to his nether limbs. . . ." (*All the Year Round*, *ubi cit.*)

A correspondent of the *Spectator* (July, 1925), mentions that 90 years ago, i.e., in 1835, a Negro servant in his grandfather's house served for some time as a footman. The fact that he was black never seemed at all strange, and Garlo (the Negro) was engaged to an English girl.



"gesticulating vivaciously—partly of orchestral necessity, perhaps, but partly, it must be, owing to excessive enjoyment of his situation—with his fellow performer, of similar complexion and costume, who plays an instrument that has vanished with its sable professor; a brazen structure, tree-shaped, with bells depending from its branches."<sup>1</sup>

There were less fortunate Negroes, also, who sold songs, swept crossings, knitted night-caps and socks, manufactured garden-nets; who begged for alms and sometimes thieved. The East Indian pedlar who still trapeses round the English countryside, an exotic and often decrepit figure with his turban and large suitcase, was also a familiar sight at the time. Then, as to-day, he traded in East Indian wares, chiefly paper packets containing scented powders of aromatic and medicinal mixtures.<sup>2</sup>

If we can accept the evidence of our late 19th-century commentator, the Negro, apart from a few crossing-sweepers, had virtually disappeared from the scene by the seventies, although

"Occasionally there is to be encountered a black bishop—a most impressive personage. For other blacks we have only those whose complexion is obviously artificial—who are lamp blacks rather than real blacks. Ethiopian serenaders they call themselves; singing to the accompaniment of obstreperous instruments, now ultra-sentimental ditties, and now songs that affect a nonsensical jocosity. Of these blacks we have certainly enough, perhaps even more than enough."<sup>3</sup>

More, perhaps, should be said of Negroes as seafarers, and of the part played by them as able-bodied seamen and as stewards on the sailing ships of the 19th century. Sometimes, before the abolition of slavery in America, they were impounded by the local authorities when their ships put into such ports as Charleston in the American South. Generally, the exchanges which ensued between the British Consul and the local governments touching the rights of a British subject, appear to have been settled in favour of the Negroes concerned.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *All the Year Round*, *ubi cit.*

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> The American authorities feared that the presence of free Negroes ashore "might engender a contagion of liberty among their slaves". Several disputes of a similar kind arose out of the presence of British ships in the waters of slave-holding countries. Slaves would sometimes swim out to a British warship, and claim their freedom on reaching her deck. The tradition that to stand on the deck of a British man-of-war was to stand on a bit of England was upheld by Mr. Justice Best in a case when a slave-owner of Florida (then a Spanish possession) sued the captain for the delivery of some slaves (*Chambers' Journal*, *ubi cit.*). In 1851, 37 British subjects were seized and imprisoned. A typical example was a Glasgow vessel which on her return voyage to Jamaica was driven into Charleston by stress of weather. One of the crew, of African descent, was immediately seized and conveyed to jail. The British consul suggested a modification of the laws simply restricting coloured persons to their vessels. (cf. *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, 1851.)

By the close of the century Britain had acquired considerable territories over a large part of Africa. Prompted largely by the efforts of the missionaries, incentives towards an English education spread widely among the growing Europeanized populations of the West Coast, and those who could afford it sent their sons to England to study. White planters in the West Indies had for some time been in the habit of educating their mulatto children in Britain. As the children of wealthy West Indian planters, mulatto West Indian young women were frequently sent to England in the early days of the 19th century to be educated and "finished". Jane Austen in *Sanditon* (published 1817), describes one of these heiresses as the most important and precious member of a boarding-school from the point of view of its proprietor. In this respect the University of Durham has had a lengthy connection with both the West Indies and West Africa. Codrington College in Barbados was affiliated to the University in the Easter Term, 1875, and Fourah Bay, Sierra Leone the next year.<sup>1</sup> To amplify the supply of native missionaries an African Training Institute was established at Colwyn Bay in 1902.<sup>2</sup>

Increasing numbers of African students came over after the turn of the century, and before the First World war appear to have been in attendance mainly at London University, although a few, apparently, studied at Cambridge and other universities, including Liverpool.<sup>3</sup> The great majority now studied medicine or law rather than theology, but on returning to Africa found that, in the first-mentioned subject at any rate, they were not considered by the Administration as on a par in

<sup>1</sup> The first students of Codrington College were registered for courses in Arts, and in 1877 the first registration in Theology was made. The first students of Fourah Bay College were registered in February 1885, and were for courses in Theology and Arts. Incidentally, most African students who take Durham degrees take them in their own country (commun. Acting Registrar of Durham University).

<sup>2</sup> *J.A.S.*, vol. 3, 1903/4, pp. 104-6. Each student was given an ordinary course of English school training, and special attention to his Scripture education. He was also taught some useful trade or profession to enable him to earn a livelihood and to teach "his heathen brethren" some handicraft like Printing, Tailoring, Carpentry, etc. The *J.A.S.* supplies a photograph of the Staff and students.

<sup>3</sup> cf. *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, 1913. At Liverpool, the earliest entry of students from the British West Indies, or from West Africa, dates from the year 1909 (commun. Registrar, Liverpool University). Trinity College, Dublin, to-day receives a large proportion of West African students reading medicine in the British Isles, but so far as can be ascertained, the first Negroes did not enter the College until 1928 (commun. Registrar, Trinity College, Dublin).

professional capacity with European practitioners. Nor, it was alleged, did they possess the confidence of European patients on the Coast.<sup>1</sup> In England, it appears as if the Negro students were left to live their lives somewhat apart, even from the student class, and some, it seems, sought companionship and consolation in less desirable directions. In some universities—Cambridge is cited as a case—prejudice against them was shown; although in this respect Indians were apparently even less popular. In London they were regarded with tolerance, but also with apathy. With a view to rectifying some of these disabilities a meeting of persons interested in the welfare of Africans was called in London in July 1913, and the question of hospitality was discussed. The gathering was well attended, and both the late Sir Harry Johnston, one-time Governor of Sierra Leone, and the late Sir John (then Mr.) Harris took a prominent part in it. The former, in particular, stressed the imperial implications of treating Africans in London in a friendly manner.<sup>2</sup>

Since that day a number of organizations catering partly or wholly for coloured visitors, and students in particular, have come into being in London. They include such bodies as the East and West Friendship Council, The League of Coloured Peoples, the West African Students' Union, the Victoria League, etc. As a more recent development the Colonial Office has instituted a special department to supervise the welfare and look after the interests of Colonial people in Great Britain. Its hostels in Earls Court and elsewhere provide accommodation for

<sup>1</sup> *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.* Johnston's speech is reported as follows: "But if in London we are not actively disagreeable to the negro who comes here, we do not—proportionately with the imperial importance of London—go out of our way to attract hither the negro for his education; to provide him, even, with the means of quickly and cheaply getting that education he wants, and to make the conditions of his stay as profitable to him mentally and as agreeable to him socially as I am sure we should if we were really an imperial people. Of course, if we prefer to be little Englanders and imagine ourselves the only race worth considering in the world, then it is different. But if we are going to maintain this mighty Empire that we have sketched out— . . . if we are to maintain this Empire on such lines that all our intelligent fellow-subjects will belong to it of their own free will; then we must minister to their advanced education and make the great educational centres of Great Britain attractive to the coloured peoples who wish to come here to perfect their knowledge. If we do not accomplish this, it will mean that . . . they will go to France and to Germany. Germany—quite rightly from her point of view—is doing all she can at the present time to attract the backward races to her centres of education, and I think it scarcely ever arises that a coloured man in Germany receives anything but kind, sympathetic and courteous treatment. I wish I could say the same about my own experience of Great Britain, but it is not so. . . ."

Colonial visitors.<sup>1</sup> 'The West African Students' Union operates similarly on a smaller scale in Camden Town on behalf of West African students and visitors.

It was the war of 1914-1918, however, which reintroduced the Negro into England in some numbers. Several thousands of coloured labourers were brought over to do work which would free Englishmen for combatant service. They worked in munition factories, in labour battalions, and also filled the places of many white merchant seamen who were transferred to the Royal Navy. As the situation arising out of this immigration has been dealt with in detail in an earlier chapter, it will suffice here merely to say that considerable objections were voiced against their arrival by the labour unions. It was feared that the idea of coloured immigration was the prelude to a substitution of white by coloured labour in wider fields of employment and to a consequent lowering of the wages and standard of living of the working classes.

## CHAPTER 8

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH RACIAL ATTITUDES

#### 1. EARLY LIBERALISM

Negroes appear to have formed a part, albeit a small one, of the population of Great Britain for rather more than three hundred years. In the relative absence of contemporary attempts at a sociological assessment of English people's attitudes towards them, it is as well to avoid dogmatic conclusions on this question. From a number of historical sources, more particularly the ramifications and implications of the Slave Trade, from various side-references and comments, and from occasional literary

<sup>1</sup> A previous Colonial Office venture in the form of a hostel was Aggrey House in Doughty Street, London, W.C.2. It was instituted in 1934 and met with considerable hostility, more particularly on the part of West Africans, on the ground that it was intended and used as a means of spying on the political views and activities of Colonial students. In a pamphlet issued by the West African Students' Union it was termed a "Government Plan for the Control of African Students in Great Britain". cf. "W.A. S.U. Protests". Suspicion about Colonial Office activities in these and other respects is still somewhat marked among Colonial Students.

material wherein the Negro appears as a character, it is possible, nevertheless, to infer a good deal. The main impression so gained is that there was little or no colour prejudice in England in the modern sense of the expression until at least the beginning of, and perhaps quite well on in, the 19th century. Dramatic personations of the black man, and of Othello in particular, are sometimes accepted as a reasonable criterion in the matter; but how far they actually are so is by no means certain. No doubt, as most reputable modern critics suggest, Shakespeare intended the Moorish prince to be regarded as an African Negro rather than as a lighter- or even darker-skinned Moor.<sup>1</sup> This has been held to indicate racial tolerance on the part of the Elizabethan audience, particularly since the whole situation of the Othello-Desdemona marriage, as an eminent American critic puts it,

"is presented as in no way 'unnatural', whether in itself or in the eyes of the world, and Othello neither has aspirations to ally himself with the higher race, nor suffers through racial intolerance or prejudice. He is happy to marry Desdemona, but not because she is a white woman or the daughter of a magnifico. As he speaks of his blackness as the cause of Desdemona's unfaithfulness but once—because Iago urged it—and turns immediately to other causes—his unpolished manners and his age. . . ."<sup>2</sup>

It is, perhaps, another question whether we are entitled in any sense to treat *Othello* as a social drama of the Ibsen school, and draw as a logical conclusion that the Elizabethans were entirely lacking in colour sensibility. Other critics have argued differently—that the introduction of a black character in this particular rôle was made merely as a deliberate contrast with the whites,

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, *Othello* (Arden Shakespeare).

<sup>2</sup> cf. E. E. Stoll, *Othello: An historical and comparative study*, Univ. Miss. Studies in Lang. and Lit., No. 2, 1915. Stoll goes on to quote a well-known passage as bearing out this latter point:

"Haply, for I am black  
And have not those soft parts of conversation  
That chamberers have; or, for I am declined  
Into the vale of years."

Stoll also claims that the only character shocked by the union is Brabantio: Iago dares to cast aspersions upon it only in his presence, Othello's and Roderigo's. Like everyone else, the Duke and Senate at the beginning, and Lodovico and Gratiano at the end, show the Moor only respect and admiration, and treat the marriage itself as above reproach. In concluding the deliberations the Duke remarks

"If virtue no delighted beauty lack  
Your son-in-law is far more fair than black."

When Lodovico sees Othello strike his wife, he has nothing to say against marrying Moors and strangers, but is simply amazed that this can be

"the noble Moor whom our full Senate  
Call all-in-all sufficient,"

thinks his wits must not be safe, and is "sorry".

and for aesthetic and dramatic reasons.<sup>1</sup> Neglecting, however, whatever sociological significance may be adduced from this interesting and controversial question, it is nevertheless apparent that actors with few exceptions have played the part as a Moor, and not as a Negro, presumably because audiences and sensitive readers found the idea of marital union with the latter too revolting.<sup>2</sup>

Whatever may have been the psychological concomitants of the Negro's presence in England in Elizabethan and Restoration times, the practical issue is not in doubt. With relatively few exceptions, up to 1772, and in specific cases even later, the Negro was to all intents and purposes a commodity on the market,<sup>3</sup> a

<sup>1</sup> Compare, for example, the views of a writer in *Blackwood's Magazine*, vol. 67, 1850, p. 484, who admits that the traditions of the stage made Othello jet black, but does not consider that the Elizabethan age was capable of drawing "fine ethnological distinctions" between a "moor" and the "Blackamoor" and a "Negro". The marriage itself is not meant as a piece of realism, but as a means of emphasizing the dramatic and poetic symbolism of the contrast.

"In life you cannot bear that the White woman shall marry the Black man. You could not bear that an English Lady Desdemona—Lady Blanche Howard—should—under any imaginable greatness—marry General Toussaint or the Duke of Marmalade. Your senses revolt with offence and loathing. But on the Stage some consciousness that everything is not literally meant as it seems—that symbols of humanity, and not actual men and women, are before you—saves the Play."

In comment on this view Dr. Stoll might reasonably reply that it is the writer himself who projects a personal or social prejudice of his day on to the England of Shakespeare's time.

<sup>2</sup> This is evidently the conclusion of the editors of the *Arden Shakespeare*, who comment on the point in a footnote to the line "Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom of such a thing as thou" (*op. cit.*, p. 26). As mentioned in the last chapter Garrick, apparently, was one who took the Negro view over the playing of Othello, and is said to have been a failure for that reason. But it is just possible that he met with disapproval and criticism less from prejudice as such, than from the sheer social inconsistency of such a portrayal with the established and servile status of the Negro serving-boy or body servant of the day. Incidentally, it appears that the actor Kean first substituted, and Coleridge endeavoured to justify, the tawny hue of the light-brown Moor of Mauritania, which appears to be followed by most modern productions. There are, of course, notable exceptions, one being a recent performance by the Cambridge Marlowe Society.

<sup>3</sup> As indicated later, it is no doubt necessary to make some fairly definite distinction between the views in this matter of those actually engaged in the Trade and of the general public. Nevertheless, the prevailing idea that Negro slaves were mere articles of commerce seems to be illustrated quite clearly in the case of the slave ship "Zong" (1781) when 130 slaves were jettisoned by the captain ostensibly on the plea that he had run out of water. He tried to put the loss of the sick slaves upon the insurance company. The law took its course, but the trial was not for murder. It took the form of an action between the insurance company and the ship-owner to decide whether the throwing overboard of the slaves was a genuine act of jettison, for which the company would have to pay, or a fraud on the policy, in which case the company would escape payment (Hoar, *op. cit.*, p. 245). The *Memoirs* continue:—

"A high court of English judicature had heard one of the great organs of the land avow the case, in which he asserted that 'so far from the guilt of anything like a

form of property like a horse or a barrel of wine, worth twelve, or thirty, or fifty pounds sterling according to his "utility". It is significant, perhaps, that in preparing his meticulous case against Negro slavery, Granville Sharp went to the extent of obtaining scientific opinion as to whether the black man was a human being.<sup>1</sup> He had no personal doubts on the subject when he wrote to Jacob Bryant that:

"I am far from having any particular esteem for the Negroes; but as I think myself obliged to consider them as *men*, I am certainly obliged also to use my best endeavours to prevent their being treated as *beasts* by our unchristian countrymen, who deny them the privileges of human nature, and to exercise their own *brutality*, will scarcely allow that Negroes are human beings. The tracing of their descent, therefore, is a point of some consequence to the subject on which I am now engaged, for their defence."<sup>2</sup>

Yet during the same period, i.e. before 1772, that very many English people, both men and women, were kindly disposed towards the Negro is no less clear. As masters they treated him with consideration; in some cases they paid him wages, arranged for him to be educated, had him taught crafts and trades, and bequeathed him money and property in their wills. Some of the leading authors and poets of the day wrote pamphlets and satirical poems on his behalf. Others subscribed money for his

*murderous act*' in casting one hundred and thirty-three living and unoffending creatures into the sea, to perish there; so far from '*any shew or suggestion of cruelty*', there was not even '*a surmise of impropriety in the transaction*'; and that, *to bring a charge of murder* against those who had acted this part of uncontrolled power, into an English court of law, '*would argue nothing less than madness*' in him who brought it thither."

(The expressions in italics were also used on this occasion by the Solicitor-General, who was employed for the owners.)

<sup>1</sup> cf. Hoar, *op. cit.*

"It is surprising, and to posterity will appear hardly credible, that the force of prejudice was so great in the enlightened nations of Europe at the time of these events that the advocate of an oppressed race, separated from those nations only by the sea, and distinguished from them only by a darker tinge of skin, thought it requisite to institute a regular inquiry, *whether the natives of Africa were men*—so unwilling was their unwearied champion to leave in the field the smallest point against them unassailed."

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94. There were several serious attempts at the time to prove that Negroes were a different species of man; that they were wanting in the moral sense, and perceived moral sensations only as simple ideas. Mr. Long, in his *History of Jamaica*, published in three volumes in 1774, wrote:

"We cannot pronounce them *unsusceptible of civilisation*, since even *apes* have been taught to eat, drink, repose and dress like men; But of all the human species hitherto discovered, their *natural baseness of mind* seems to afford the least hope of their being (except by miraculous interposition of Divine Providence) so far refined as to think as well as act like men. . . ."

"I do not think that an Orang Outang husband would be any dishonour to an Hottentot female."

(Quoted from the appendix to the *Memoirs*, Granville Sharp's note on these writings.)

succour against predatory slave-owners and for his defence in the courts.<sup>1</sup> It is no less obvious that the many slaves who absconded would have found neither mercy nor shelter had they not possessed a host of English sympathisers. Lord Mansfield's own reluctance to come to judgment over *Somerset* seems to have been prompted not by prejudice against Negroes, but rather by desire not to upset with the established order of things.<sup>2</sup> His sentiments may be described as paternalistic, and paternal attitudes towards the British Negro seem to have been the rule rather than the exception until well on in the succeeding century. It was poverty and the wrong connections, rather than the wrong colour, which accounted for the Negro's lowly place in society and the prejudice shown against him.<sup>3</sup> In the wider and more important ramifications of the Slave Trade it is easy to overlook this point. The Slave Trade and the holding of plantation Negroes abroad, and the treatment of individual Negroes in England are not necessarily the same thing, however strongly economic considerations may have favoured the former.<sup>4</sup> Moreover,

<sup>1</sup> Some of Sharp's work was done with the aid of funds supplied by a Mrs. Bankes, and other persons supplied funds for a similar purpose.

<sup>2</sup> Dunning, who appeared on the opposite side against the Negro, complained that it was his misfortune to address an audience, "much the greater part of which, I apprehend, wish to find me in the wrong" (Hoar, *op. cit.*, p. 89).

<sup>3</sup> Discussing the historical background of white-coloured contacts in South Africa (at about the end of the 17th century), MacCrone seems to come to a fairly similar conclusion regarding the easier relations between a white and a coloured person, and his words are worth quoting at some length:—

"The distinction between black free burgher and free black, if it ever existed, could have little or no social significance, for even in official documents the two designations were sometimes applied to the same person. . . . What is significant, however, from our point of view, is that at this period the social distance between the class of person under consideration and the Europeans was not nearly so great as it afterwards became. Social contacts between white and black were evidently more free and easy and the social attitude of the former more tolerant of the latter. The black man of this class had not yet 'lost caste' in the eyes of the white man, and persons of colour were not then excluded by an impassable psychological barrier from enjoying some sort of status as *swart vry burghers* or *vry swarten* within the framework of the European community."

(I. D. MacCrone, *Race Attitudes in South Africa*, O.U.P., 1937, p. 73.)

<sup>4</sup> cf. C. M. Macinnes, *England and the Slave Trade*. Macinnes summarizes popular attitudes towards the Slave Trade as follows. Prior to 1660, though some Englishmen profited by the slave system, the general attitude, in so far as there was one at all, both in the colonies and at home, was one of contempt. Englishmen in the 17th century held slavery in detestation and considered it to be inconsistent with their free traditions and the spirit of their constitution. This attitude changed entirely during the latter years of the century. For over a hundred years after the Restoration both the slave trade and the system of colonial slavery were accepted by the majority of Englishmen as necessary and inevitable for English mercantile prosperity. A discernible change in public opinion tending towards philanthropy began about the time of the American Revolution.



there was the curious paradox, arising partly out of the circumstances of the Trade itself, whereby it was highly necessary to gain and to retain the friendship of certain Negroes, even if the relationship was a purely business one.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. EMINENT 18TH-CENTURY NEGROES

There is plenty of evidence that individual Negroes in England won respect and a position for themselves on their own merits. Coloured men who acquired wealth and patronage were received without reservation in the very highest circles. A French mulatto, the Chevalier Georges de St. Georges, son of the Marquis de Langey and a Negro slave, was a personal friend of the Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV, and as the champion swordsman of his day, and an accomplished rider, skater and violinist, once set the fashion in the English as well as the French courts.<sup>2</sup> George I is said to have brought two Negro favourites with him from Germany, Mustapha and Mahomet, who enjoyed such high favour that some of the great English lords were jealous of them.<sup>3</sup> Another Negro, Ignatius Sancho, was a well-known London character. His portrait was painted by Gainsborough, and engraved by Bartolozzi.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, his career affords such a striking illustration of the paradoxical position of the man of colour in the 18th century that it is worth relating in some detail.

Sancho was born in 1729 on board a slave ship, a few days out from the Guinea coast for the Spanish West Indies, and was baptized at Cartagena. His mother died soon afterwards, and his father committed suicide. When he was two years old, his master presented him to three maiden sisters at Greenwich, who took the view that education was dangerous to an obedient disposition and kept him in ignorance. But the boy's intelligent appearance attracted the attention of the Duke of Montagu, and

<sup>1</sup> The difficulties of trading with the West Coast are mentioned in an extensive footnote in the last chapter, and may be examined in detail in H. A. Wyndham, *The Atlantic and Slavery*.

<sup>2</sup> J. A. Rogers, "The American Negro in Europe", May 1930, quoted in *Negro Year Book*, pp. 374-6.

<sup>3</sup> J. A. Rogers, *The Crisis*, Feb. 1940.

<sup>4</sup> George, *op. cit.* The subsequent notes on Ignatius Sancho are taken from *Letters (and Memoirs) of the late Ignatius Sancho, an African*. Joseph Jekyll (1803).

as a result of the acquaintance Sancho learned to read and write. He became butler to the Montagu family, and subsequently received from the old Duchess in her will the sum of £70 and an annuity of £30. During the time of his service and until his own death, Sancho showed himself a person of considerable and artistic versatility. He not only studied, but wrote music and poetry, and his verses were published in 1803. He was also regarded as something of an expert on painting, and was visited by Mortimer. Sancho was particularly interested in the theatre; he not only wrote two stage pieces, but tried his hand at the parts of Othello and Oroonoko, and, it is said, once spent his last shilling to see Garrick in *Richard* at Drury Lane. Constitutional corpulence and repeated attacks of gout obliged him to retire from the Montagu household in 1773 to run a grocer's shop with his wife, a West Indian woman, who bore him six children.

Sancho's epistolary efforts<sup>1</sup> provide an indication of the width of his interests, philanthropic and literary, and of the friendly relations which were possible between a Negro and some of the most illustrious English men of the day, including Garrick and Sterne. The extent of his popularity is evident in the fact that on his death, in 1780, over one thousand persons, amongst them many members of the nobility and gentry, subscribed to have a

<sup>1</sup> One of Sancho's letters written to an English acquaintance recommending the qualifications of a coloured friend is an example of the Negro's facile style:

August 12 1775

"Dear Sir,

If I knew a better man than yourself—you wou'd not have had this application—which is on behalf of a merry—chirping—white tooth'd—clean—tight—and light little fellow;—with a wooly pate—and face as dark as your humble; Guiney born and French bred—the sulky gloom of Africa dispelled by Gallic vivacity—and that softened again with English sedateness—a rare fellow!—rides well—and can look upon a couple of horses—dresses hair in the present taste—shaves light—and understands something of the arrangement of a table and sideboard;—his present master will authenticate him a decent character—he leaves him at his own (Blacky's request):—he has served him for three years—and, like Teague, would be glad of a good master—if any good master would be glad of him.—As I believe you associate chiefly with good-hearted folks—it is possible your interest may be of service to him.—I like the rogue's looks, or a similarity of colour should not have induced me to recommend him—Excuse this little scrawl from your friend, etc.

Ign. Sancho."

In 1776 Sancho wrote to Sterne and asked him to give some "publicity" in his writings to the plight of the West Indian negroes, and received a friendly reply. Sancho also took a keen interest in public affairs. There are other letters addressed to the Press, and signed "Africanus", of a date subsequent to the Mansfield judgment, on matters of national and social policy, such as the raising of public funds, and a proposal for setting up a standing force of 20,000 seamen, and navigation schools in place of pressing men into the Navy. *Op. cit.*, pp. 70-71.

collection of his letters published. "Such was the man," remarks his biographer, Joseph Jekyll, M.P.,

"whose species philosophers and anatomists have endeavoured to degrade as a deterioration of the human; and such was the man whom Fuller, with a benevolence and quaintness of phrase peculiarly his own, accounted 'God's Image, though cut in Ebony'."<sup>1</sup>

It is possible that there were other Negroes with careers as distinguished, but whom the historian has left virtually unrecorded.<sup>2</sup> It seems evident that until at least well on in the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> Another Negro with a less distinguished but interesting career was Olandah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa (mentioned in the last chapter). He was taken on board a man of war off the African coast and sailed in Admiral Boscawen's fleet as servant to a naval lieutenant. He was baptized in St. Margaret's Church, Westminster, in 1759, and after varied experiences as a powder monkey, captain's steward, and trader in the West Indies, was recommended by Governor Macnamara and others to the Bishop of London as a missionary on the West Coast. The Bishop received him "with much condescension and politeness; but, from some certain scruples of delicacy, declined to ordain me". Subsequently he was appointed by the Sierra Leone Committee as commissary on their behalf, and in 1788 presented the Queen with a petition on behalf of Africans in the West Indies.

A lively interest and sympathy with less fortunate members of their race seems, in fact, to be quite a characteristic of educated Negroes of whom we have any individual record during the period under review. His tutors' report on young Naimbanna, for example, indicates both a spirit of patriotism and a very definite sense of racial consciousness, such as characterises nationalistic Africans of the present day:

"He was quick in all his feelings, and his temper was occasionally warm; some degree of jealousy also entering into his character; in particular, he was indisposed to answer questions put to him by strangers concerning the state of his own country; for he was apt to suspect that they meant to draw comparisons unfavourable to its character; and he would therefore, on such occasions, often turn the conversation by remarking that a country so unfavourably circumstanced as Sierra Leone had hitherto been, was not to be supposed capable of having made any attainments worthy of conversation in Great Britain (3). . . .

"The name of a person having been mentioned in his presence, who was understood by him to have publicly asserted something very degrading to the general character of Africans, he broke out into violent and vindictive language. He was immediately reminded of the Christian duty of forgiving his enemies; upon which he answered nearly in the following words:—'If a man should rob me of my money, I can forgive him; if a man should shoot at me, or try to stab me, I can forgive him; if a man should sell me and all my family to a slave-ship, so that we should pass all the rest of our days in the West Indies, I can forgive him; but' (added he rising from his seat with much emotion) 'if a man takes away the character of the people of my country, I never can forgive him.' Being asked why he would not extend his forgiveness to those who took away the character of the people of his country, he answered: 'If a man should try to kill me, or should sell me and my family for slaves, he would do an injury to as many as he might kill or sell; but, if any one takes away the character of Black people, that man injures Black people all over the world; and when he has once taken away their character, there is nothing that he may not do to Black people ever after. That man, for instance, will beat Black men, and say, "Oh, it is only a Black man, why should I not beat him?" That man will make slaves of Black people; for when he has taken their character, he will say, "Oh, they are only Black people—why should not I make them slaves?" That man will take away all the people of Africa, if he can catch them; and if you ask him, "BC

18th century English men saw nothing extraordinary in a Negro possessing talents equal to their own. By the end of the century, however, the persistent arguments of the slave dealers had taken effect so thoroughly that even the philanthropists and those most concerned in the Negro's welfare and moral progress shared in the popular surprise at his intelligence. The pre-Emancipation period, too, saw the cult of the "noble savage".<sup>1</sup> The voyages of Captain Cook, Anson, and other travellers, brought specimens of Red Indians, Eskimos and South Sea Islanders to the London streets. They aroused a great deal of curiosity, not only on the part of men of science and learning, but amongst the general public, whose interest at times was somewhat naive. At the same time, these exotic strangers seem to have been treated with considerable courtesy, and concerned as religious people were over their "pagan" practices and lack of Christian morals, attitudes towards the unwitting proselytes were not unduly patronizing. One of the best known of these "noble savages" was Omai, a native of Ulaieta in the Society Islands, who was brought to England in 1775 by Captain Furneaux in His Majesty's sloop *Adventure*. The indefatigable Sharp soon "perceived an inlet opened by this means, for the diffusion of Christian light over a new race of men", and as a preliminary step, attempted with his usual diligence to teach Omai to read and write English. The record he has left of his meetings with the Polynesian and of their conversations are a good indication of his own, and possibly of many other Englishmen's, tolerant if moralistic attitude towards the aboriginal.<sup>2</sup>

why do you take away all these people?" he will say, "Oh, they are only Black people—they are not like White people—why should not I take them?" That is the reason why I cannot forgive the man who takes away the character of the people of my country.' " Hoar, *op. cit.*

<sup>1</sup> Coupland, *op. cit.* Perhaps the best known representation and clearest contemporary conception of the "noble savage" has been left by Defoe in Robinson Crusoe's Man Friday.

<sup>2</sup> Hoar, *op. cit.*, chapter 8, "Conversations with Omai".

"When sitting with him at table one day after dinner, I thought it a good opportunity to explain to him the Ten Commandments. I proceeded with tolerable success in reciting the first six Commandments. He had nothing to object against any of them though many explications were required before he understood all the terms; and he freely nodded his assent. But when I recited the seventh Commandment, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery', he said, 'Adultery! what? what that?'

" 'Not to commit adultery,' I said, 'is, that, if a man has got one wife, he must not take another wife, or any other woman'. 'Oh!', says he, 'two wives—very good; three wives—very, very good.'—'No, Mr. Omai' I said, 'not so; that would be contrary to the first principle of the law of nature'.—'First principle of the laws of nature,' said he; 'what that? what that?' 'The first principle of the law of nature,' I said, 'is, that no

## 3. THE NEGRO IN 19TH-CENTURY FICTION

The indications are, therefore, that colour sensibility as such was very little in evidence during the 18th century. No doubt Negroes, in general, were thought of more as slaves and servants than anything else, but there appears to have been no particular aversion to meeting or mixing with a person simply on the ground of his colour. In later years the situation is much more difficult to gauge, despite the wide-spread enthusiasm aroused by the Abolitionist movement. The Abolitionists, it has to be remembered, dealt with an idea, the freeing of slaves and Negroes, not with an actual social situation, the question of mixing and living alongside them. If, however, the novels of Thackeray and Jerrold are any guide, it was the lower rather than the better-off classes of society which were colour-conscious even so recently as a hundred years ago. In Jerrold's *St. Giles and St. James*, Kitty is a servant in a noble house in which her Negro gentleman friend, Mr. Caesar, is footman. Her friend, the muffin-maker's wife, hears about the attachment, and her exclamation is:

"Why bless me, she's never going to marry a nigger. She'll never do such a thing."

*man must do to another person any thing that he would not like to be done to himself.* And, for example, Mr. Omai,' said I, 'suppose you have got a wife that you love very much; you would not like that another man should come to love your wife.' This raised his indignation; he put on a furious countenance, and a threatening posture, signifying that he would kill any man that should meddle with his wife. 'Well, Mr. Omai,' said I, 'suppose, then, that your wife loves you very much; she would not like that you should love another woman; for the women have the same passions, and feelings, and love toward the men, that we have towards the women; and we ought, therefore, to regulate our behaviour toward them by our own feelings of what we should like and expect of faithful love and duty from them toward ourselves.'

"This new state of the case produced a deep consideration and silence, for some time, on the part of Mr. Omai. But he soon afterwards gave me ample proof that he thoroughly comprehended the influence of the law of liberty, when it is applied to regulate, by our own feelings, the proper conduct and behaviour which we owe to other persons. There was an ink-stand on the table, with several pens in it. He took one pen, and laid it on the table, saying, 'there lies Lord S—' (a Nobleman with whom he was well acquainted, and in whose family he had spent some time); and he then took another pen, and laid it close by the side of the former pen, saying 'and there lies Miss W—' (who was an accomplished young woman in many respects, but unhappily for herself, she lived in a state of adultery with that Nobleman); and he then took a third pen, and placing it on the table at a considerable distance from the other two pens, as far as his right arm could extend, and at the same time leaning his head upon his left hand, supported by his elbow on the table, in a pensive posture, he said, 'and there lie Lady S—, and cry!'

"Thus it was plain that he thoroughly understood the force of the argument from the law of liberty, respecting the gross injury done to the married lady by her husband in taking another woman to his bed." *Ibid.*, pp. 150-2.

To which comes the significant reply:

"Miss Kitty is a long way the other side of a chicken. And when women of her time of life don't snow white, they snow black."<sup>1</sup>

Jerrold's description of Caesar's visit to the gallery of the Covent Garden Theatre to see *George Barnwell* indicates, also, that Negroes of the day had already been allotted a rôle, that of a buffoon, which, as the American and Hollywood "coon" representation, is a characteristic of modern racial attitude—

"Caesar attempting to rebuke Miss Canary's revilers, diverted all their sport to himself.

"'Bill,' cried one, 'isn't it going to thunder? it looks so black.' 'I wish I was a nigger,' roared another, 'then I'd be a black rose between a couple of lilies too.' And then other pretty terms, such as 'snow-ball', 'powder-puff' were hurled at Caesar."

Outside the city, however, it is possible that the reaction and attitudes of the rural people towards the Negro were quite different. Thackeray's Gumbo, though looked upon as somewhat of a curiosity, was admired and respected by the domestic circle at Castlewood. He was a universal favourite at the village inn, where he enjoyed considerable prestige as a fisherman, blacksmith, and huntsman.<sup>2</sup> No objection was raised, apparently, to his marrying one of the housemaids.<sup>3</sup>

Another of Thackeray's novels, *Vanity Fair*, gives perhaps

<sup>1</sup> Douglas Jerrold, *St. Giles and St. James*, 1851, p. 53.

Eventually the appearance of Mr. Caesar in the house of that small trader causes consternation as well as amusement. It is altogether too much for Miss Canary, the genteel vendor of fruit and snacks at the Covent Garden Theatre, who has fallen in life.

"Caesar silently seated himself and looked about him—keenly relishing the cordiality of his reception—with a face lustrous as blackest satin. In his great contentment, he saw not Miss Canary who had risen from her chair, and stood still with unclosed lips and wandering eyes, evidently feeling that her treasured gentility was quitting her for ever, drawn magnetically from her by the presence of a negro. She could not stay in the same room as a blackamoor—that was impossible. . . .

"Without knowing what she did, Miss Canary dropt in the chair; and then vehemently hated herself for the docility. . . . A livery was bad enough, but a livery with a black man inside it! There was no lie she would not tell to escape the degradation.

"'You're very good, Mr. James; very kind, but I've such a headache,' said Miss Canary, 'I do think my head will split in two. . . .'"

"'Got a headache,' exclaimed Kitty: 'Where's my salts, Caesar?'"

"Immediately Caesar, taking a small bottle, warm from his pocket, advanced towards Miss Canary, who tried to shrink through the back of the chair, as the black approached her."

Such an interlude to-day would probably be more typical of a London suburb, or possibly a Bloomsbury boarding house, than of Holborn.

<sup>2</sup> W. M. Thackeray, *The Virginians*. (Thackeray himself was well disposed towards Negroes.)

<sup>3</sup> *op. cit.*

the best insight into the attitudes of the middle and upper classes of the earlier part of the century. Interestingly enough, it seems to be the younger rather than the older generation of Vanity Fair which is colour-conscious, and even that to a small extent compared with their awareness of other and economic considerations. When Miss Swartz, the woolly-haired but wealthy mulatto from St. Kitts, is introduced into the circle,

"the major part of the Osborne family, who had not in fifteen years been able to get up a hearty regard for Amelia Sedley, became as fond of Miss Swartz in the course of a single evening as the most romantic advocate of friendship at first sight could desire."

For Mr. Osborne and his daughters, with visions of balls in Portland Place, presentations at Court, introductions to half the Peerage, George in Parliament, and other good things which could result from Miss Swartz's money, the fact that the lady is coloured is of small moment. But George himself, who is a captain in the Army and commissioned for India, thinks differently. He is guided by other social values, and makes no bones about his prejudice, although he admits that the lady has her points:

"She has diamonds as big as pigeon's eggs. . . . How they must set off her complexion. A perfect illumination it must be when her jewels are on her neck. Her jet black hair is as curly as Sambo's. I daresay she wore a nose-ring when she went to court; and with a plume of feathers in her top-knot she would look like a perfect Belle Sauvage."

The main concern of Mr. Osborne is that some "damn fellow from the West End" will come in with "a title and a rotten rent roll"<sup>1</sup> whilst George is still dallying. George's reply is indicative, perhaps, of the new implications which colour as a mark of social inferiority had by this time acquired—

"Marry that mulatto woman? I don't like the colour, sir. Ask the black that sweeps opposite Fleet Street, sir. I'm not going to marry a Hottentot Venus."

#### 4. THE ABOLITIONISTS AND POPULAR ATTITUDES

It is obvious that for very many years in the 19th century feeling and popular sentiment on behalf of the Negro as the

<sup>1</sup> The announcement in the *Scots Magazine* of the marriage of a Scottish baronet in 1825 to "Miss— of the West Indies, a very dark young lady—£30,000" seems to bear this out.

victim of slavery ran very high in the country. No doubt the spirit of controversy, as well as the Abolitionist and missionary movements, did much to keep this stirring. Public meetings and appeals on behalf of the Cause were held long after the abolition of British participation in the Trade and the emancipation of slaves in the British colonies. Mrs. Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had travelled far and wide, and with great effect, and individual Negroes were in great demand at Exeter Hall as speakers, particularly if they came with first-hand experiences as freed slaves. Negrophile attitudes, apparently, were strong in all sections of society, especially amongst the nobility and the "middling and better classes" which, to use the words of one Negro and trans-Atlantic visitor, could be relied upon to "treat a black man as a gentleman".<sup>1</sup> To some extent the philanthropic possibilities of the movement attracted the charitable and spare-

<sup>1</sup> This was Samuel Ringgold Ward, who has recorded his experiences in the U.S.A., Canada and Great Britain under the title of *The Autobiography of a Fugitive Slave*. Ward's escape by the "underground railway" to Canada, and his work in the Abolitionist Movement there and in Great Britain, show him to have been a person of considerable resource and ability. The account of his experiences in travelling on a British ship to England is very illuminating as a description of how even at that relatively early date (1853) American colour prejudice was affecting British treatment of the Negro.

It appears that the friend who booked his passage on the Cunarder "Europa" was handed a ticket with the endorsement—

"This gentleman's passage is taken with the distinct understanding that he shall have his meals in his stateroom—Ed. Cunard."

"As if this were not enough, so soon almost as I touched the deck of the ship, a fine, gentlemanly-appearing *Englishman* accosted me—

"Mr. Ward, I believe?"

"The same."

"You are going out to Liverpool?"

"I am."

"When Mr. T. took your passage I was obliged to say to him that you would take your meals in your stateroom; for you know, Mr. Ward, what are the prevalent feelings in this country in respect of coloured people, and if you eat at the cabin table Americans will complain. We cannot allow our ship to be the arena of constant quarrels on this subject; we avoid the difficulty by making the rule that coloured passengers shall eat in their staterooms, or we can't take them."

"I replied, 'I desire, Mr. Cunard, to be in London by the 4th of May. If I wait for another steamer, I shall be too late. For that reason I submit to that to which, I wish you to understand, I do not consent.'"

Apparently Ward soon got on terms of friendship with his fellow passengers, and relates that Thackeray, who happened also to be travelling, was in the habit of calling on him every evening for an hour's conversation. Eventually, he was invited to take his meals in the public cabin, and the only objection, which came from a Welshman who had lived as his firm's representative in the Southern States for some years, was overruled.

Ward's own analysis of the prejudice shown towards him is similar in essential respects to a modern commentary on the same subject (compare Nancy Cunard, *Negro Anthology*, Wishart & Co.).



time activities of idle ladies, and to patronize societies for the emancipation of Negroes became as fashionable as it had been one hundred and fifty years earlier to own one. Since the cause coincided with a period of acute social distress in Britain, it is not surprising that it came in for a great deal of reproach. Mill-owners were accused of succouring the black slaves out of the profits ground out of their white ones,<sup>1</sup> and Michael Sadler in a propagandist ballad told the true story of a factory child who had collapsed and died from overwork and ill-treatment while she was trying to go home through the snow after her day at the loom—

“That night a chariot passed her while on the ground she lay,  
The daughters of her master an evening visit pay,  
Their tender hearts were sighing as negro wrongs were told,  
But the white slave lay there dying who earned their father’s gold.”<sup>2</sup>

Despite this, the Negro seems to have raised extraordinarily little exasperation, even among those who had least reason to pity him.<sup>3</sup>

## 5. THE GROWTH OF PREJUDICE

By the end of the 19th century, however, attitudes towards the Negro, as well as notions concerning him, seem to have undergone a considerable change. No doubt the emotions of sympathy aroused on his behalf had a great deal to do with this. An object for pity becomes very often an object for condescension. The difficulty was that by emancipation he had theoretically ceased to be either. It was no longer possible to regard him merely as the faithful black, a typification of servile devotion and fidelity. It was as if in becoming a “man and a

<sup>1</sup> Macinnes (*op. cit.*) writes:—

“The majority of English men could afford to be zealous in the negro’s interests, since so few of them were affected in their pockets by a campaign which threatened ruin to the plantations. It was much easier to be sympathetic and broadminded about negroes in Jamaica whom wealthy and cruel planters exploited than to protest against the sufferings of English women and children who were daily sacrificed in the mills on the altar of the new industrialism” (p. 168).

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Lascelles, *op. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> J. L. and Barbara Hammond (in a reference which I am unable to check) relate how the Glasgow spinners held a public meeting to protest against the treatment of the slaves on the plantations at a time when their own plight was probably even worse than that of the objects of their compassion.

brother", as one anonymous commentator puts it, "he forthwith ceased to be a friend". Members of the public who had known the Negro in his servile days looked back to them and to him with sentiment and affection, but it is doubtful if they could bring themselves to recognise and to relish him on terms of equality:<sup>1</sup>

"By emancipation the Negro secured relief from serving in that (menial) capacity at any rate, and forthwith he retired from duty as footman, valet and body-servant. How far he was ever competent to discharge the duties of those offices can hardly now be determined. If memory can be trusted, he seemed a willing, useful, and most zealous functionary. Some of us must surely possess youthful reminiscences of these Caesars and Pompeys of the past. How they grinned! How they shone! How picturesque they were! They glorified the livery they assumed; they sublimated their plush. There was no killing their complexion; the brighter were the hues brought to bear upon it, so much blacker and therefore better it looked. A negro might wear a dress made of flamingo's feathers—he could set them off, as they would him."

How far this situation was affected further by the imperialistic fervour of the concluding years of the century it is difficult to say. Britain does not seem to have recognised any "colour problem" as such until after the First World war. A few years after the Armistice of 1918, R. T. Lapiere, an American sociologist, made a short comparative study of racial attitudes towards the Negro in various towns of England and France, and since this provides the first scientific summary on the matter the results are recapitulated here in some detail.

In France, Lapiere questioned 428 people with some variant of "Would you let a good Negro live in your house?" and a further 315 people in England with "Would you let children (your own or other white children as the case might be) associate with those of good coloured people?"<sup>2</sup> Every effort was made to prevent any suspicion arising as to the purpose of the questioning. In so far as it is possible to effect a broad comparison, it appeared that some 10 per cent. of the French sample, as against some 80 per cent. of the English, expressed prejudice. On the other hand some 67 per cent. of the French sample were apparently without prejudice against some 4 per cent. in the case of the English

<sup>1</sup> *All the Year Round*, *ubi cit.* The "brotherhood" of the Negro was accepted and made plain by the scientists; and Professor T. H. Huxley, speaking at the Royal Institution, according to the *Anti-Slavery Reporter* (Vol. 15, No. 7, 1867), said: "The negro is not the missing link between man and monkeys; he is further removed from anthropoid apes in many respects than the English are."

<sup>2</sup> R. T. Lapiere, *Social Forces*, VII., 102-11. "Race Prejudice: France and England," quoted in *Negro Year Book*, 1931-32.

one.<sup>1</sup> "Why," Lapiere enquires, "do the French lack colour prejudice?" He points out that in the main the attitude of the average Frenchman towards the Negro must be called "derived", for the permanent Negro population is usually negligible. The coloured population in England is equally small, and the fact that many of them as students are well educated in English customs and economically independent, would lead to no antagonism. The other English source of direct contact, which on the whole is less than in the French case, is with Africans and small numbers of Indian seamen in the port areas, and would affect only a small part of the English population. He concludes, therefore, that:

"The problem becomes, then, one of determining what there has been in English colonial contacts, which have been direct contacts, which differs so greatly from that of French colonial contacts, that it could give rise to a strong antagonism in England, expressed as colour antipathy."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* In order to get the widest possible distribution in France not more than ten or fifteen people were so questioned in any village or city; in all 41 towns, villages and cities being represented in the results, which from rural and urban France were as follows:

	Total.	Without Prejudice.	Doubtful.	With Prejudice.
RURAL . . . .	227	181	38	8
URBAN . . . .	201	106	58	37
TOTAL . . . .	428	287	96	45
CLASS:				
Upper . . . .	36	3	9	24
Middle . . . .	141	76	60	11
Lower . . . .	257	220	27	10
SEX:				
Male . . . .	332	228	76	28
Female . . . .	96	59	20	17

In England only four districts were sampled, and the results were as follows:

	Total.	Without Prejudice.	Doubtful.	With Prejudice.
LONDON . . . .	137	8	23	106
BIRMINGHAM CITY . .	43	2	7	34
„ COUNTRY . . . .	25	0	6	19
NORTH WALES . . . .	28	1	3	24
LIVERPOOL . . . .	82	3	8	71
TOTAL . . . .	315	14	47	254
MALE . . . .	259	10	38	211
FEMALE . . . .	56	4	9	43

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Some 20 years later, a somewhat similar enquiry on colour prejudice in England and France was carried out by S. P. Adinarayanian on the basis of the Bogardus Social District test. 175 English subjects and 30 French subjects were asked to scale their attitudes towards a number of European and coloured nationalities, i.e. English, Canadians, French, Germans, Chinese, Americans, Red Indians, Indians, Italians and Negroes. From the English sample (which included well

## 6. THE PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND AND COLONIAL CONTACTS

This is an interesting and pertinent suggestion, but it must suffice for present purposes to consider it merely in terms of the present British situation, which requires some kind of historical review if the variety of approaches implicit in modern attitudes in this country towards the coloured man, and which involve paternalism as well as repugnance, and friendliness and sympathy as well as condescension, are properly to be understood.

Coloured people seem to have been virtually absent from the English scene throughout the greater part of the period preceding modern times, and this means a corresponding absence of direct contacts at home, though not, of course, abroad. For this reason it is necessary also that the psychological, or rather the philosophical background, from which 19th-century and more recent racial attitudes developed in this country, should not be neglected.

The most extensive contacts of the British with coloured people occurred in India, and it will be recalled in that respect that the "colonial" outlook changed very substantially between approximately the mid-18th and mid-19th centuries.<sup>1</sup> In the early days, in Africa as well as India, English traders and officials were largely at the mercy of the native peoples concerned. They were obliged for their own safety and for the sake of business to accommodate themselves to the wishes and even the foibles of their hosts. It was a situation which offered little incentive to

"educated" people in the main) "prejudice scores" were obtained (in ascending order of magnitude) in respect of Indians, Italians, Chinese, Turks, Negroes and Red Indians. No prejudice scores were secured from the 50 British students included in the sample in respect to any of the above nationalities, but from French students prejudice scores were made (in ascending order of magnitude) in respect to Italians, Negroes and Turks. Adinarayaniah's conclusion from his data is that colour prejudice is less among the French students than among the general British public, but it is undoubtedly much greater among them than among British students (cf. S. P. Adinarayaniah, *Brit. J. Psych.*, 31, 217-29). This finding is, therefore, somewhat at variance with that of Lapiere, quoted above, but, it should be added, is open to rather severe criticism on methodological grounds.

<sup>1</sup> In its earlier days, the East India Company obtained settlements, concessions, and factories only on the sufferance of the Mogul, and of the local rulers, upon whose goodwill their commercial activities were entirely dependent. After 1707, this situation was altered by the break-up of the Mogul Empire. Largely for their own safety, the Europeans were obliged to take sides with the warring factions, and from a commercial outpost the Company soon developed into a military and conquering organisation. Significant dates in this respect are 1751 with Clive at Arcot, and the conquest of Bengal in 1755.

prejudice and even less opportunity for feelings of racial superiority; and this, as already indicated, was at a time when the Slave Trade was at its height. With the conquest of India and the gradual consolidation of British rule, however, an entirely different attitude developed. It was one of complete self-assurance<sup>1</sup> coupled with a changed and almost fastidious reaction to native customs and practices which the officials of the East India Company had previously connived at and often condoned.<sup>2</sup>

Though its implications are rather less clearly defined and its progress is more variable, much the same kind of situation developed, also, in the case of British Africa at different stages of the late 18th and 19th centuries.<sup>3</sup> In the latter case, so far as the repercussions at home are concerned, the growth of racial prejudice is fairly obvious, and for a number of reasons which can briefly be explained. It is probable, for example, that the real

<sup>1</sup> It is significant for the growing self-confidence of English attitudes that no question was asked as to the attractiveness of British methods, though various writers spoke of the "immeasurable distance between us and the natives". Two years before the Mutiny, Dalhousie remarked that war or rebellion might break out in India at any time, but did not ask if British rule was attractive as well as successful and advantageous. As early as 1819 Elphinstone gave expression to the new attitude when he said, "the fault of our younger politicians—who have never seen the Indian States in the days of their power—is a contempt for the natives, and an inclination to carry everything with a high hand". (cf. *Cambridge History of the British Commonwealth, India*.)

<sup>2</sup> Many of the early traders found it convenient to live in the native fashion and to take local women as wives. It is significant of the change in outlook that Sir Thomas Munro, who governed Madras between 1820 and 1827, should write:

"We should look upon India . . . as a possession . . . to be maintained permanently, until the natives shall in some future date have abandoned most of their superstition and prejudices, and become sufficiently enlightened to frame regular government for themselves. . . ."

This religious view of Munro was held by the majority of the leading Indian Civil Servants of the changing times whose attitudes in the matter were to a large extent inspired by their horror of suttee and infanticide; it was coupled with equally strong views on the remedial value of English education. (cf. E. L. Woodward, *The Age of Reform*, "India", pp. 387-93.)

Amongst the more specific factors responsible for the new attitude was the fact that the steamship had shortened periods of service, and fewer Englishmen, therefore, inclined to regard India as a home; the increase in the number of English women in the country made social relations less easy and more self-conscious; and the religious situation at home, which had changed profoundly under the influence of the Evangelical movement (*ibid.*).

<sup>3</sup> For South Africa, see MacCrone (*op. cit.*) who affords a striking illustration of considerations fairly similar to the Indian example, and has traced in a convincing way the change in European attitudes towards the aboriginal peoples of the Cape. The present writer is not aware of any completely analogous study respecting West and East Africa, but regarding the former territories, Wyndham (*op. cit.*) and Martin (*op. cit.*) as well as other historians of the areas concerned, provide numerous instances of Anglo-Negro contact and their outcome, more particularly in the earlier days of British settlement on the coast.

basis of feelings of superiority towards the African was laid in the Slave Trade, and as early as the 17th century. The effect of this on the rank and file of English-speaking people was to make all slaves members of a permanently inferior caste. All Africans were thought of as potential slaves.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the interest awakened in evolution and evolutionary theories which gained momentum during the third quarter of the 19th century, was interpreted socially, as well as biologically, and since it was inconceivable that the Victorian world could be anywhere save at the moral and cultural apex of the scheme, the "savage" had to be graded accordingly.<sup>2</sup>

The later 19th century was notable, too, not only for the parcelling out of Africa amongst the European powers, but for the facility with which the expansionist tendencies of those powers were rationalized. Interest in and the use of the concept of race for national and political purposes rose to a pitch which has been excelled only in recent Totalitarian propaganda. Every such theory, Aryanism, Nordicism, and Teutonism, is consistent in affirming the superior race to be white, whatever further criteria are demanded for the chosen people. By corollary, it is equally unambiguous in attributing inferiority of biological status to the coloured races, with various concomitants of sensuality, apathy, mental incapacity, etc., scaled according to the particular cultural values of its propounders.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> cf. F. G. Detweiler, "The Rise of Modern Racial Antagonisms", *American J. Soc.*, vol. 37, pp. 131-2.

<sup>2</sup> It is less generally realized, perhaps, that in some respects the implications of the Darwinian theory were anticipated in a racist sense many years before the *Origin of Species* by several scientists and writers. One of the former, Charles White, read a paper to the Manchester Philosophical Society in 1796 entitled "An Account of the Regular Gradations in Man, and in Different Animals and Vegetables, and from the Former to the Latter", the thesis of which was that the Negro "seems to approach nearer to the brute creation than any other of the human species". A later anthropological excursion of a less obviously racist pattern is the polygenic theory of the German anthropologist Klaatsch.

Lewis Morgan's theories of social "evolution" are quoted by R. Lowie in his *History of Ethnological Theory*.

Ralph Linton (*The Study of Man*) suggests that the theory of evolution took the place of previous rationalizations in justification of the dominance of the white races. Since the latter had survived and been more successful than the other races, they must be superior to them, not only in organization and efficiency, but in every other field, including the mental and moral.

<sup>3</sup> The kernel of the latter kind of philosophy is epitomised, of course, in the writings of de Gobineau, whose racial hierarchy is based on the black races as the serf class of society, followed by the yellow, and with the white races, representing god-like reason, and excelling in mental, moral, and physical features, as the ruling class (see his *Inequality of the Human Races*).

These resuscitated and newer attitudes towards the African included corollaries, such as horror and repulsion, which the older ones of paternalism and curiosity seldom possessed, and which were relatively rare even in the case of Indians.<sup>1</sup> Such aspects derived in the main from the outpourings of returned missionaries, and to some extent, perhaps, from the somewhat ingenuous discoveries, anthropological and otherwise, of early ethnologists, travellers and explorers. The fact that, thanks to the influence of Lord Teignmouth, the missionaries had penetrated even to the heart of the East India Company's territory as early in the century as 1813, was symptomatic of their enthusiasm and zeal for work with fresh "heathen" whose cultures and religions, unlike Islam and Hinduism, were too weak to withstand them. No doubt, as Detweiler remarks, "it helped the cause to paint the savage repulsively", and to describe him in "somewhat terrible terms".<sup>2</sup> Hitherto, Africans had been thought

Books more widely read in this country were Madison Grant's *Passing of the Great Race*, and Lothrop Stoddard's *Rising Tide of Colour against White Supremacy*, neither of which is at all diffident about proclaiming the innately superior and civilizing qualities of the White races and their civilizing mission and destiny. The latter author, indeed, describes the spirit of the times rather aptly when he writes that Kipling's famous phrase, the "White Man's Burden" . . . "only faintly conveys the almost religious spirit of consecration with which many of the great European empire-builders undertook their task. . . . Men like Havelock, Nicholson, and Gordon, the martyr of Khartoum, felt themselves engaged in something very like a divine mission. This belief in themselves and in their cause was a source of immense spiritual power".

It is unnecessary to enlarge on the ramifications of this matter, which have been treated very extensively elsewhere and by numerous authors, such as F. H. Hankins, *Racial Basis of Civilisation*, and Jacques Barzun, "Race", a *Study in Modern Superstition*, amongst the foremost.

<sup>1</sup> The main psychological element in the Indian case seems to have been one of superiority, and according to a contemporary "correspondent" of *The Times* it played a large part in aggravating the situation which led to the Mutiny:—

"I allude to our roughness of manner in our intercourse with the natives . . . and I must say that I have been struck with the arrogant and repellent manner in which we often treat natives of rank, and with the unnecessary harshness of our treatment of inferiors. The most scrubby mean little representative of *la race blanche* . . . regards himself as infinitely superior to the Rajpoot with a genealogy of 1,000 years. . . ."

<sup>2</sup> Detweiler, *op. cit.* See, in particular, Mary Kingsley on this point in her *West African Studies*, pp. 321–2. She writes, also, of the apathy of the English public, "a public which unless it is stirred up by horrors would not subscribe."

The overseas missions were largely a derivative of the Evangelical Movement, which attained its height in 1825. When the 18th century opened, and for many years to come, there was not a single Protestant missionary in the entire world with the exception of a small group of the Moravian Brethren. The Methodists opened in 1787 a regular system of foreign missions, and this was eleven years after the foundation of a Society for Missions in Africa and the East. The Baptists and the Evangelicals followed respectively in 1792 and 1795, and the latter founded before the Anglican Society a London Missionary Society, based on principles of united action by all denominations of orthodox Christians. Nonconformist missionaries were now scattered

of mainly as potential slaves: and the public did not know any way to distinguish them except by their dark colour. Now, the black man who had previously occupied the compartment "slave", went into the compartment called variously "savage" and "heathen" along with the red men;<sup>1</sup> but as the "bogey man" of the late Victorian era he was a different kind of savage from the days of Dampier and Anson.

Though the implications of missionary fervour in the late 19th and early 20th century were far-reaching, it is probable that so far as the British public is concerned, another and material factor was of more general significance in this matter. Convincing as national and evolutionary theories on race may have been to certain intellectuals and *littérateurs* of the day, it is doubtful if they moved the common man very much. The general public has never had much patience with abstract notions of race and racial superiority, and more particularly in recent times it is more likely that the general belief in "Civilisation" and the whole philosophy of "progress", which Storck is not alone in regarding as a distinguishing trait of Western culture, was far more conclusive in justifying psychologically and apparently concretely, what the racialists claimed in less understandable language.<sup>2</sup> Not only is there a curious kind of magic and compulsion about such words and catch-phrases, but in purely objective terms also the immense achievements of Western society—unprecedented development of tools, tool technology, efficient organisation, scientific inventions, etc., etc.—stood out in convincing contrast to what was popularly known and appreciated of non-civilised and coloured peoples.<sup>3</sup>

throughout the British colonies wherever there were slaves or aborigines to be converted, in Nova Scotia, Jamaica, Trinidad, or on the West Coast of Africa, among the Hottentots, or in the East Indies (cf. Halévy, *A History of the English People* in 1815).

<sup>1</sup> Detweiler, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> cf. J. Storck, *Man and Civilisation*, pp. 60–61, who claims that the contemporary notion of "progress" was unknown to the ancients. Compare also S. B. Fay in *Methods in Social Science*, p. 287, and Edward Carpenter, *Civilisation, its Cause and Cure*.

In his analysis of South African attitudes, MacCrone (*op. cit.*) points out clearly that the attitudes remain the same, though they may be differently rationalised. The emphasis is now laid upon the white man and his "civilisation" rather than upon the Christian and his "religion" (footnote to p. 135). This point has probable significance for the development of racial attitudes in this country, but the present writer has been unable to trace sufficient material to make an exposition of the transitional stages evident enough.

<sup>3</sup> W. Bryant Mumford, *Island India*, makes this point rather clearly in his description of Dutch-Javanese contacts. W. G. Sumner, *The Folkways*, has an interesting passage on the sociological significance of Catchwords and Shibboleths.



## 7. THE PART OF THE COLONIAL CLASS

We may now continue in the light of this historical perspective to consider Lapiere's suggestion, and this from the angle, also, that the philosophical and psychological background described above is more meaningful as an explanation of contemporary racial attitudes when certain dynamic factors are added to it. These derive partly at least from the nature of British colonial policy and methods of government. In contrast to what appears to be the assimilative aim of French policy, at any rate so far as literate members of the French colonial empire are concerned, British colonial organisation has so far made for separation rather than amalgamation in the social as well as in the racial sense.<sup>1</sup> The British dependencies contain a relatively small number of highly educated and highly paid officials, representing the higher academic and social classes of England, whose work in Africa, as elsewhere, consists mostly of organising and directing coloured subordinates—a situation which inevitably creates a wide social gulf between African and European.<sup>2</sup> The British official's dominance is consolidated and enhanced by the relatively higher rate of salary attached to it, which in the Administrative services proper rises customarily to £1,000 per annum, and includes pension rights, leave with pay, and free passages for wives and children.

<sup>1</sup> It is possible to perceive some modification in the non-assimilative aspects of British colonial policy in recent declarations of "partnership in the Empire".

<sup>2</sup> For an interesting discussion of the social implications of French vis-à-vis British policy see W. B. Mumford and G. St. Orde Brown, *Africans learn to be French*, chapter 1. These writers claim that the logical outcome of the French situation in respect to Government services is that French officials who live and work alongside coloured men and women tend to look upon them and to treat them largely as colleagues and friends. In French territories, where many European officials have minor qualifications and occupy minor posts and some Africans have high qualifications and occupy senior posts, both Africans and Europeans share a French outlook upon life, as well as similar standards of living and similar interests. In the British case, the social barriers, for reasons of official etiquette apart from anything else, are virtually impassable. Mumford summarizes the matter and its converse implications as follows:

"Any African who has been educated in a French school finds ready friends in French officials. But in the interior French officials tend to have little patience with the completely uneducated African. Hence they often seem harsh and cruel. The experience of British officials was exactly the reverse. They had . . . unlimited patience and understanding of the untutored Africans in the bush, but they found it difficult to mix with educated Africans on terms of mutual respect and for mutual enjoyment" (p. 68).

The social implications of this at home are very considerable: bearing in mind that in, for example, the years before the 1939 war, only some 4 per cent. of the British population enjoyed incomes of £500 per year and over, and anything over £1,000 per year put the recipient into the same income-group as the top 1½ per cent. of earners in Great Britain. It enabled British middle-class persons, as Leonard Barnes points out, to live upper-class lives on condition that they went to the Tropics to do so.<sup>1</sup> Taking both official and unofficial employees in the other coloured countries of India and Burma, as well as in the Colonies, the same writer estimates that they number between 156,000 and 240,000.<sup>2</sup>

This class of government officials, merchants, and others directly in contact with coloured peoples is a small proportion of the British population as a whole, but a very significant one in terms of the peculiar position it occupies in the social and economic hierarchy. History offers few, if any, examples of a privileged and influential class being willing to forego, or even to share, its power and status with those whom they dominate. It would be invidious to suggest that the majority of British people thus placed are guided consciously by such considerations in their reactions to the coloured man. It would be equally invidious to doubt that much that is obscure in racial attitudes of hostility and antagonism is explicable in this way—in terms of resistance to a threat, real or imaginary, to existing status.<sup>3</sup> From the sociological angle the implications of this point are immediate and often far-reaching. The social position and prestige of the colonial class at home is enough to give their personal opinions, whether uttered privately or in public, considerable weight, and rationalizations on their part, even when apparent, are less readily contested by the general public on the grounds of their propounders' first-hand knowledge and experi-

<sup>1</sup> cf. Leonard Barnes, *Democracy or Empire*, p. 9, et seq. Elsewhere (*Soviet Light on the Colonies*) the same writer argues in the more general sense that the British colonial system depends largely on the tradition and policy of protecting British extra-territorial rights abroad, rather than on developing the areas concerned.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> For psychological expositions of this suggestion, see G. M. Stratton, *Social Psychology of International Conduct*, pp. 45–65, and F. Brown, "The Socio-Psychological Analysis of Racial Prejudice", *J. of Abn. Soc. Psych.*, vol. 26, pp. 364–75.

The existence of prejudice among individual Colonial officials is very strongly implied in a very recent Colonial Office White Paper on the Colonial Service (June, 1946).

ence.<sup>1</sup> It would be unwise to generalize too far on this point, but the following comments of a correspondent of the *Spectator* on the Indian Civil Servant, though less relevant, perhaps, in respect of tropical dependencies, contain enough truth to be reproduced *in extenso*:—

"The growing colour prejudice against the Indian in England is due, among other things, to the fact that the Britishers retired from overseas dependencies and now permanently settled in England are increasing in numbers from year to year. Through circumstances which they could not always help these gentlemen had occasion to see only a small section of the people in those countries and by no means the best side of their character. Therefore, the opinions which are now given and taken as the result of lifelong experience were really formed on an imperfect knowledge.

"An Indian civil servant goes to India at about 24. During the first four or five years of his career in India he is posted to a country town in the capacity of what is called a sub-divisional magistrate. He spends the morning in going through his files and receiving visitors who are mostly title-holders and title-seekers or seek jobs for themselves or their dependents. The hours between eleven and four—the so-called office hours—he spends in trying criminal cases of all descriptions, such as theft, burglary, arson, rape, poisoning, etc. The European community in such towns is extremely small, consisting often of a few jute merchants with whom he spends the evening. He cannot help listening to their complaints of the tricks played on them by native brokers. He does not seek any Indian society, because the Indians he has met or heard about did not impress him. Four or five years of life like this and the young English Civil Servant has formed his opinion of Indians. . . ."<sup>2</sup>

Before we conclude, there is a final and even more subtle sociological factor which requires brief mention. This is the acute and almost unique sense of class-consciousness which developed in English society as the product of multiple forces before and during the Industrial Revolution. The result of this social and economic upheaval, in particular, was to throw increasing doubt on the validity of wealth and its possession as a satisfactory criterion of social position. This affected the middle classes more than the upper classes of society, and meant that

<sup>1</sup> Leonard Barnes (*op. cit.*) quotes G. T. Garratt as suggesting that "these pensioners" with colonial and Indian service, who have spent their active careers "exercising petty dictatorships" of their own over Asiatic or Indian servants, form the handiest of all raw material for a fascist movement at home. At the same time, Barnes admits that the modern official, with all his limitations, is remarkably free from jingo sentiment, and views with wholesome scepticism the old "clap-trap" about Empires designed to spread European enlightenment in the dark places of the earth. He sees himself, not as an Empire builder, but as a builder and decorator of native societies. (*Op. cit.*)

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in the *Spectator*, March 1931. According to another Indian correspondent of the same periodical, "it was usually found at the hotels and boarding-houses where they (coloured people) were refused accommodation, that the "objectors" were white lodgers who had been in the East and "had seen the native in his den".

members of the former groups felt continuously anxious about their position and correspondingly ready to assert it. Largely as a consequence of this, the other and less easily acquired traits of social superiority—possession of education and the appropriate performance of social etiquettes and rituals—assumed an intrinsic importance of their own in helping to distinguish society. In such insignia the “black man” and the aboriginal, particularly as he was known to or interpreted by travellers and missionaries and in other ways, was plainly lacking. His only qualification was his blackness, the former label of “slave”, and its other associations. He fitted in, therefore, only on the bottom rung of the social ladder to elevate those hardly less lowly placed than himself and to become thereby the recipient of social attitudes whose basis was class as much as race.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, and with ever-varying shape, out of the historical and complicated background of overseas exploration, slave-ownership, and colonial expansion, and their rationalization and incorporation in the cultural heritage, developed the diffuse assortment of modern English attitudes towards the coloured man, described in more detail in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 9

### THE COLOURED MAN THROUGH MODERN ENGLISH EYES

#### I. LACK OF POPULAR KNOWLEDGE AND INTEREST

In attempting to describe the Englishman's impressions of coloured people in Britain and his reactions towards them, it is important to realise that so far as something like 95 per cent. of English people are concerned,<sup>2</sup> they are based entirely on some stereotyped idea rather than on first-hand personal knowledge

<sup>1</sup> Coloured students studying social welfare or methods of teaching in the poorer quarters of London and other cities still complain fairly frequently of attitudes of “superiority” as well as curiosity towards them on the part of even some of the most down-at-heel and decrepit inhabitants of the districts concerned. (cf. Kobina Sekyi in the *Anglo-Fanti*, quoted in the final chapter of this book, “The Coloured Man's Reaction to the English”).

<sup>2</sup> This estimate is based on enquiries made in the course of lecturing to troops, with audiences of 200. It must obviously be regarded as extremely tentative.

of coloured people. These form a very small part of the English population, and although the Second World War increased their numbers and widened their distribution, they are ordinarily to be met or even seen in anything like representative numbers only in the large seaport cities, including London, and, in a less representative sense, in certain university towns. It will already be clear that the coloured person in the dockland area of English ports is usually of the poorer, less "acculturated" and less educated type. As we shall see more fully in the next chapter, factors in the sociological situation itself, such as the colour bar, limit even further the ordinary Englishman's possibility of meeting an educated coloured person, and tend to restrict such contacts largely to officials of the Colonial Office, welfare organisations, and the like.

Further, the ordinary English person has little interest in and even less knowledge of Colonial countries and peoples. The war has introduced various Colonial place-names like Singapore, Hong Kong, etc., into current conversation, but it is doubtful whether five persons out of a hundred could say, for example, if Kumasi, the Ashanti capital, is in Africa, Asia or Australia; or could name a single African people apart from the Zulu. Knowledge of the ethnology of the Colonial empire is probably even more sparse than of its geography, and all things considered it is safe to conclude that most English people's conception of "the Colonies" is an extremely hazy one. This general lack of information and apathy appears to derive largely from the curricula in English schools. In the up-to-date geography book, it is true, there is usually a fairly adequate account of various "colonial" peoples, more particularly in reference to their economic adaptation to environment, and sometimes even a short account of their social institutions. But the older geography books, and those used in elementary schools, are often incomplete or out of date on this point, or deal mainly in popular generalisations like "lazy Negroes", "impassive Redskins", etc. Anthropology as a subject does not exist in the ordinary school syllabus, and it is therefore to History that we might reasonably look for a comprehensive description and analysis of these questions. An examination of some two dozen "British" histories in use mainly in English secondary schools shows that the extent to which such ground is covered in terms of the actual history,

institutions and affairs of colonial peoples is altogether negligible. British coloured peoples and countries, with the occasional exception of India, receive little more than incidental and random treatment, and with very few exceptions the light is thrown exclusively on the rôles of European administrators, statesmen, soldiers, settlers, missionaries, etc., never on the local peoples. Coloured peoples lack all identity and are characterised simply as "natives", wherever they may live.<sup>1</sup>

It is only when we approach the teaching of Colonial History in terms of Higher School Certificate and university standards that its presentation can be regarded as anything like comprehensive. But the inclusion of the subject in these examinations does not seem to have led to any degree of interest in the matter. The report of an enquiry made in 1941 by a sub-committee of the Headmasters' Conference makes it clear that

"The significant feature . . . is not that the Boards did not set papers on the Empire, but that the schools did not ask for them, and made but meagre use when they were set. . . ."<sup>2</sup>

It is hardly necessary to add that ignorance on matters appertaining to the Empire on the part of English people is particularly galling to colonial visitors, who are themselves taught in their schools at home, in the West Indies, West Africa and in other parts of the Empire, the essentials of "British" history. It is no less significant that when the Royal Empire Society has offered prizes for essays on subjects connected with the Empire, it has been more successful in attracting candidates in the Dominions and the Colonies than in this country. A prize has been won as far afield as an Indian Reserve in Alberta.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The last paragraph is based on an enquiry conducted by a group of educationalists to which the present writer acted as honorary secretary. Their report has been published under the title *Race Relations and the Schools*, by the League of Coloured Peoples.

Apart from the points mentioned above, several other deficiencies were found, such as a general misuse of the term "race", which might be expected to contribute substantially to misunderstanding as well as apathy on the Colonial and racial situation.

<sup>2</sup> cf. *The Round Table*: "Education and Empire" 1942. Out of eight Boards which conduct examinations for the School Certificate, four set a special paper on Empire History. Candidates taking this were:—

Oxford Delegacy	—	600 out of 10,000 candidates.
London Matric.	—	20 out of 1,800 candidates.
Cambridge Local	—	225 out of 6,500 candidates.
Central Welsh Board	—	5 out of 5,500 candidates.

In the High School Certificate Examination, Oxford, Cambridge and London set optional papers on Imperial or Colonial History, which were taken by 22 and 118 candidates respectively.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

In short, it is not easy, even in general terms, to say how general knowledge and opinions regarding the coloured and Colonial peoples are affected by the schools. No doubt there is some reason to modify the verdict of Miss Perham, a writer on Colonial affairs, who remarks in a recent anthology that—

“At school and subsequently I had absorbed the idea that pre-European Africa was a place of complete and anarchic savagery.”<sup>1</sup>

But even granting, as is not unreasonable, the possibility that present-day teachers are disposed to be more enterprising, it is difficult to see how, in the absence of anthropology from the curriculum, and of an anthropological outlook, any real and significant presentation of Colonial peoples can be effected. Even granting that the study of human geography affords some scope, it appears that “the School Certificate examining boards do not set special papers on Human Geography, and in general, geography in Secondary Schools is undifferentiated at the School Certificate stage”, and “is limited to a degree of emphasis on the human aspects of geography”.<sup>2</sup> Biology is another subject, particularly in its human aspect, which might be regarded as having some significance for this problem and for that of cultural and biological differences, and during the years 1937 to 1941 rather more than 15,000 candidates annually offered this subject. But here again there is a virtual absence of any emphasis on the human side,<sup>3</sup> and no adequate substitute for anthropological considerations.

The bearings of the educational question as a stimulus to and background of knowledge on the subject are too wide for adequate justice to be done them here,<sup>4</sup> and it must suffice to note that

<sup>1</sup> cf. M. Perham and J. Simmons, *African Discovery*.

<sup>2</sup> Communicated by Board of Education.

<sup>3</sup> Communicated by Board of Education, 1943.

<sup>4</sup> On the wider implications of school teaching and curricula, the following remarks of a somewhat critical observer require consideration:—

“School teaching is still based largely upon the use of text-books; and text-books, besides being dangerous simplifications of information, are usually behind the times. New discoveries, new facts, new opinions, do not filter down into text-book expression for some years after their original enunciation. There is a time-lag which results in the information given to the children—unless it is corrected and amplified by teachers—being slightly maladjusted to the actual facts of their environment. In a word, children are being a little misled in their acquisition of knowledge—the misleading amounting to a form of propaganda on behalf of the old-fashioned, the traditional, and the conservative, as against the new-fangled, the innovating and the reforming point of view.” R. S. Lambert, *Propaganda*, p. 107.

traditional and simplistic interpretations of human behaviour, particularly in respect of the "simpler" cultures, have taken deep root even among the better-educated members of English society. The following statement, abstracted from the writings of a well-known authority on jurisprudence, may be regarded as a fair index to the opinions of many well-read members of the public—

All creatures are creatures of habit. In the lower forms of life, habit is automatic and apparently uncontrollable; we call it instinct, and beyond knowing that it exists and produces extraordinary phenomena, we are unable to explain it. In man, habit is not entirely automatic; though in the more primitive forms of social grouping it is very nearly so. There is not a vast difference between the automatism of an ant and the tribal habits of the Australian aborigine; the ant, indeed, in many respects has the better of the comparison.<sup>1</sup>

There is no doubt that a great deal of the present apathy in educational as well as in more popular circles regarding the Colonies can be traced to the reaction against "imperialism" which followed the First World war. It has its counterpart in the political field in the fact that the Colonial Empire is discussed in the House of Commons only once a year, and since enquiries addressed to the Minister at question time have only an indirect bearing in the legislative sense, the function which nominally belongs to the elected representatives of the English people is left largely in the hands of a permanent bureaucracy. In recent years, judging by the frequency with which the position of Secretary of State for the Colonies has changed tenants, the post has not been one to command the permanent attention of an ambitious politician.<sup>2</sup> In these circumstances, ignorance and lack of interest on the part of the ordinary Englishman come to form a vicious circle. They constitute, moreover, another restrictive factor, so far as personal contacts with coloured people in this country are concerned, and one which should be borne in mind in assessing the Englishman's racial impressions.

In the abstract sense, however, English people on the whole are favourably disposed and sympathetic towards the coloured man. They believe as keenly in the idea of his being given "a square deal" as in that of democracy. They deplore the suggestion

<sup>1</sup> Carlton Kemp Allen, M.A., D.C.L., "Custom: Nature and Origin" in *Law in the Making* (1939), p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> cf. *Downing Street and the Colonies* (Fabian Colonial Bureau) for an interesting discussion of this point.



that he should be exploited, and are hardly less anxious (in no less abstract and general terms) that he should go forward on terms of equality with the white man. Most attitudes are no more specific than this, and without careful cross-examination it is virtually impossible to decide whether the average English person has any particular goal, political or social, or any reservation or qualification in his views on the subject, though some exception may be made in the case of Indians and Chinese.

## 2. THE OFFICIAL STANDPOINT

This ideological and rather benevolent view of the man in the street is expressed from time to time on his behalf by the Colonial Secretary of the day and by other officials. Particularly since the beginning of the Second World war announcements such as the following have been frequently forthcoming:

If we are fighting for liberty we cannot set bounds to the advance of other races. We must avoid any reproach that, when we blame Hitler for his poisonous doctrine of the *Herrenvolk*, we have a similar doctrine lurking in our own hearts.<sup>1</sup>

Similar views are echoed periodically by Left Wing newspapers with a suitable note of righteous indignation at Government ineptitude or official failure to propagate the appropriate policy:

Coloured peoples will only support us with enthusiasm if we give them cause to do so. The test of a policy is the response it evokes from the governed under the impact of crisis.

With solemn regularity our rulers assure us that this is a world war, a war in which all human beings that aspire to freedom fight as one, irrespective of creed or race. Let them turn this assurance into reality by pursuing a policy to match.<sup>2</sup>

Left Wing newspapers also find the existence of colour prejudice a particularly useful stick with which to beat the existing administration:

When the other fellow's skin happens to be coloured, then the Britisher's gift for underestimating him becomes all the more pronounced. The Colonial administrator and trader have been so accustomed to feeling a superior being among "the natives" that they have grown almost incapable of treating them on equal terms—either as foe or friend.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lord Moyne, Secretary of State for the Colonies, at a meeting of the Royal Empire Society, October 1941.

<sup>2</sup> *News Chronicle* leader, after the fall of Malaya, Feb. 1942.

<sup>3</sup> *News Chronicle* leader.

Government spokesmen themselves and other publicists are equally definite in their pronouncements about colour discrimination:

I should like to say at once that the British Government is in favour of putting an end to this prejudice as quickly as possible. It should die a natural death as many other prejudices have done in the past, and it should be helped to die quickly.<sup>1</sup>

And the theme is taken up by the writer of a *Times* leader-page article, who suggests that

We must ask whether we can continue to indulge ourselves any longer in an attitude of mind which, at its worst, regards other races of men almost as if they were another species.<sup>2</sup>

Many similar declarations and quotations, comments and observations, could be adduced. They come from every section and stratum of English society, from the trade union to the Church Assembly and from the House of Commons to the local newspaper. Their general tenor leaves no possible doubt of the fact that in every sense of official pronouncement and policy, colour-bar practices as well as colour prejudice are strongly discountenanced.<sup>3</sup> The question of legislative measures has been raised on a number of occasions in the House, in respect both to the position of lodging-house and hotel keepers and the licensing of dance halls. In each case, however, the Government spokesman has indicated that such matters are not under the control of the legislature, and in the case of dance halls, are for local control. If it can be shown that a hall which is licensed for a given purpose

<sup>1</sup> Brendan Bracken, Minister of Information, in the Sunday press.

<sup>2</sup> Margery Perham, *The Times*, 14th March, 1942.

<sup>3</sup> They are equally discountenanced in the law courts. In a case at London Sessions in 1924, two women were charged with robbery from an Indian. The jury were long in considering their verdict, and on the chairman inquiring whether they would like to ask him any questions, the foreman said that the "question of colour" had been raised. Sir Robert Wallace promptly declared that it was scandalous that such a point should be raised in a British Court of Justice, and ordered the jurymen who had raised the question to leave the box, and another juror was sworn in. (Quoted in *Anti-Slavery Reporter and Aborigines' Friend*, vol. 13, no. 4, 1924, pp. 158-9.)

In a more recent case in Liverpool, Recorder Hemmerde commented critically on the Government's failure to protect its Colonial subjects from discourtesy in various forms in this country. The legal position in respect to lodging houses and hotels over this matter is extremely complicated, and seems to hinge mainly on the question of contract, and in no way on race or colour. On various occasions coloured individuals who have been refused accommodation have sued the hotel keeper concerned on the former ground and have been awarded damages. A recent and well publicized case was that of Mr. Learie Constantine, the West Indian Cricketer, *v.* Imperial Hotels Ltd., in which the plaintiff was successful and was awarded damages on a technical and purely legal point.

is in fact discriminating against a section of the community, it is a matter for local appeal against the holder of such a licence.<sup>1</sup> The official attitude, in other words, recapitulates the traditional basis of English constitutional principles, i.e. to allow the maximum of latitude in the settlement of local affairs, with the minimum of interference from the central government.

### 3. "RESISTANCE" TO COLOURED PEOPLE AND ITS EXTENT

It is evident that there is a wide gap in several respects in this country between the professed and official attitude towards the Colonial and coloured peoples of the Empire as an abstract concept, and the attitude towards them in terms of social and personal relationships. Perhaps the simplest way of assessing the discrepancy is to note how English people react towards the latter, i.e. to the possibility of close individual contact with a coloured person. From "census" material relevant to some 700 "cases", consisting in the main of middle-class families, and with a fair sprinkling of guest-house proprietors, landladies, etc., it is estimated that up to some 60 per cent., and perhaps even more, specifically refused to take a coloured person into their homes or houses. These data were collected in the years immediately before the Second World War. The questionnaire method, as a rule, suffers from the difficulty of distinguishing between the actual and the supposed reactions of the "subjects" concerned. In this case, however, the subjects would obviously expect to be called upon to receive a coloured guest, and in consequence their reaction may sociologically, if not psychologically, be regarded as valid. The greatest "resistance" was shown in the case of the guest-house proprietors, followed by the "private families" and landladies. The sample contained a fair proportion of persons who may be regarded as "highly educated", i.e. who possess university degrees, practise as doctors, lawyers, etc., and of the clergy. There was no significant difference between their reactions as a group and that of the sample as a whole.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Hansard*.

<sup>2</sup> A full description of this experiment, with tables and a discussion of its sociological implications, is given in Appendix I. The respective proportions of "hostesses" were: "private individuals and families" 82.5%, landladies 11.5%, guest houses and boarding houses 6.2%.

In a further and deliberately planned experiment, members of Workers Educational Association classes were asked to supply answers, in an anonymous capacity, to the following questions:

1. Do you know personally any members of the following Coloured peoples: Africans, Indians, Chinese, West Indians, any other Coloured peoples? If so, say how many such persons you do know, and how well.
2. What do you believe your reaction would be to the idea of mixing socially; (A) being introduced to, or playing some game like tennis, and (B) dancing with members of the aforementioned coloured peoples?
3. What do you believe the reaction in your home would be if you introduced a Coloured person into it?
4. Please say briefly whence you believe your opinion or knowledge of Coloured persons or peoples is *mostly* derived.

Some 300 forms were distributed, and 43 which were returned were suitable for classification. Their answers were summarised in the following table. It should be remarked that most of the subjects, as members of W.E.A. classes, may be looked upon not only as relatively well informed, but as possibly more liberal in their views on matters of this kind than quite a substantial section of the population. It will be noted that they indicated their strongest resistance in the case of Africans (the category least personally known), and of dancing with an African. Though the numbers in either case are much too small to offer significant results, it will be noted that in terms of supposed "home reactions" it was thought that Africans would be received least favourably in the home circle. Indians are known personally on the widest scale, and "reactions" towards them and the other "nationalities", including West Indians, are generally uniform.

#### 4. PHYSICAL REPULSIONS AND THEIR ANALYSIS

It was clear from these analyses, as well as from further empirical consideration of the matter, that English people hold a wide variety of prejudices against coloured persons, and profess to be unwilling to make social contact with them for those reasons or rationalisations. One of the most frequent objections mentioned is on account of physical attributes. This applies most strongly in the case of the Negro, and repulsion to his physical features is the reason usually given. A woman teacher (aged 35) was repelled by the idea of dancing with coloured persons solely because of their colouring, and the "fact that they

## SUPPOSED PERSONAL REACTIONS

Know	Favourable to		Unfavourable to		Favourable (qualified)		Unfavourable (qualified)		Doubtful							
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B						
Africans	.	8	29	17	.	6	17	.	1	4	.	1	1	.	5	5
Indians	.	22	30	25	.	2	2	.	2	6	.	—	—	.	4	5
Chinese	.	11	28	21	.	3	4	.	2	6	.	—	—	.	5	6
West Indians	.	7	28	19	.	3	5	.	1	5	.	—	—	.	5	6
Others	.	7	26	17	.	1	3	.	1	6	.	1	1	.	5	6

## SUPPOSED REACTIONS IN HOME

	<i>Favourable</i>		<i>Unfavourable</i>		<i>"Embarrassment"</i>		<i>Doubtful</i>	
	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>
Africans	.	.	12	.	16	.	3	1
Indians	.	.	16	.	11	.	4	4
Chinese	.	.	15	.	13	.	3	3
West Indians	.	.	15	.	11	.	4	3
Others	.	.	13	.	11	.	3	5

*Note:* The figures denote number of replies received to each question. Analysis of the replies in terms of the age and sex of the subjects showed no significant difference from the above.

were not British". A man in the leather trade understood that Africans smell, and the same belief was shared by a labourer aged 24, a woman teacher aged 48, and a schoolmaster aged 27. None of these people knew any Africans personally. The younger woman added that she would not like to dance with an African owing to his colour. A woman school teacher also thought that Africans would not be favourably received in her home owing to "repulsion, distrust and failure to understand, due to colouring". There would be an abhorrence also of Chinese because of their Oriental features. Other English people said that "Negroes would be nice if you could see them white instead of black"; "I dislike Negroes and Chinese because they are coloured; I know they can't help it, but no more can I help disliking them". Chinese and Japanese are also disliked "because of their slit eyes and yellow skin"—"because they move stealthily"; Chinese "because they have an unhealthy look". Negroes are disliked because of their rolling eyes, and because they show the whites of their eyes.<sup>1</sup>

In this type of attitude, the question of associational, emotional and psychological factors requires careful consideration. A person who objects to the Chinese because they look "unhealthy" may unconsciously make some morbid association between skin colour and disease. On the other hand, the prejudice expressed may be a rationalisation of some more deeply-seated emotion, which primarily has no racial connection. Several women who had never been in social or close proximity to a coloured person

<sup>1</sup> The prominence of personal traits in fixing racial attitudes is also endorsed by an investigation which Miss L. C. Sparling carried out in 1934. Her subjects were asked to say why they liked or disliked certain people. The reasons given for liking people fell broadly into three groups: (a) qualities of temperament and character; specific skills and occupations; (b) nationality; (c) physical qualities. In her results, "personal attributes of mind and spirit by far exceeded any other factor in the assignment of reasons for definite attitudes towards peoples or nations". Yet curiously enough, in the case of "Negroes", who were disliked less than Chinese, among the adult subjects attributes of body such as "ugly", "colour", and "physical" provided something like two-thirds of the reasons advanced for dislike. Among the children disliking Negroes, on the other hand, only about one-quarter of the reasons for dislike fell into this category. The contrast was even more marked in the case of the Chinese who were disliked for cultural reasons, such as "warring", "cruel", etc. In the case of the adult "reaction" to the Chinese, an attribute of a physical kind accounted for something like four-fifths of their objections.

(Communicated by Miss L. C. Sparling. Miss Sparling worked with groups of school-children from primary and secondary schools in Hull, and with adult groups of both sexes, consisting of university graduates and undergraduates at Edinburgh, Training College students, W.E.A. students, etc. Her total of 365 subjects was divided approximately evenly between children and adults.)

declared a physical abhorrence of making such a contact, more particularly with an African. One mentioned the possibility of his black hand coming into contact with her own white skin. Another said that she would feel bound either to cross the road or even to run away for similar emotional reasons, were an African to approach her in the street. Neither was able to advance any rational explanation of this type of emotional reaction, and both confessed themselves somewhat ashamed of it. Such a fear would appear to correspond in some degree to the "phobia" or morbid fear of the psychasthenic patient, and it is possible that, clinically speaking, its aetiology is similar. A phobia is a fear for which there is no obvious reason. The sufferer is afraid to walk across an open space or to remain in a closed room. He recognises that his fear is absurd, and is often very much ashamed of it, but no amount of persuasion will cause it to disappear.<sup>1</sup>

All this is true of persons who display this kind of aversion to "colour", and from the attitude of mind clinically designated as "phobia" seems to indicate a difference of custom rather than kind. The "patient" who fears to cross a road, to remain in a closed room, etc., is regarded by society as somewhat abnormal, and sometimes for that reason alone comes to regard himself as "ill". The "patient" who feels a strong physical repulsion against touching the hand of a black man may be conscious of her irrationality, but is not forced by the pressure of normal English society to look upon herself in any way as pathological. It is possible, too, that in some cases a physical aversion to colour and the coloured man may be an unconscious rationalisation from the social situation itself. It is perhaps significant that such aversions are expressed quite often by people whose ideas regarding coloured people and social treatment of them are of the most liberal order. Even liberal individuals, however, are often, at the same time, very conscious of their own social position. They realise the social implications of being seen publicly with a coloured man, and this conflicts with their ideological standpoint in the matter. In such cases, the settlement of the "conflict" in terms of a physical aversion suggests a further mental mechanism not unfamiliar to the student of psychoanalysis.

<sup>1</sup> cf. T. A. Ross, "Psycho-Neuroses", *Common Neuroses* (p. 138), and compare section 8, chapter 10,

Through a somewhat similar psychological process, the "blackness" of the Negro diffuses itself over persons or objects around. In an hotel at Hull, some English commercial travellers refused to occupy certain rooms on the grounds that the apartments had been "contaminated" by the presence of some African guests.<sup>1</sup> With this kind of phobia, the degree of "contamination" increases almost perceptibly with the darkness of the skin.

On the psycho-analytic plane, too, it would appear as if the Negro stereotype provides a small section of English society with a convenient scapegoat and symbol into which various repressed desires and longings, and sometimes irritations, can be injected with impunity. There is a fund of risqué stories which circulate readily in English society, in which the sexual

<sup>1</sup> Such a situation is much more general on the other side of the Atlantic. Compare the following parallel from a recent sociological study of racial relations in the American *Deep South*:

"The belief in the organic inferiority of the Negro reaches its strongest expression in the common assertion that the Negroes are 'unclean' . . . there remains a strong feeling that the colour of the Negroes is abhorrent and that contact with them may be contaminating.

"There is generally a strong feeling against eating or drinking from dishes used by Negroes, and most of the whites provide separate dishes for the use of their servants. The idea of uncleanness is also extended to any clothing worn by Negroes, as was dramatically shown when a Negro customer returned a coat which she had bought from a white clothing merchant. The clerk was unwilling to accept the coat, and when the assistant manager accepted it, the clerk said to another clerk: 'This is perfectly terrible: I think it is awful. We can't put that coat back in stock' . . . She hung it up very gingerly and didn't touch it any more than necessary.'" (*Deep South: A Social Anthropological Study of Caste and Class*, Allison Davis and B. B. and M. R. Gardiner, p. 16.)

The implications and associations of the word "black" in English culture are manifold and interesting. Among the meanings in the *Oxford English Dictionary* are the following: deeply stained with dirt; soiled, dirty, foul; having dark or deadly purposes; malignant; pertaining to or involving death, deadly, baneful, sinister, iniquitous, horribly wicked. Clouded with sorrow or melancholy; dismal, gloomy, sad—the opposite of bright and cheerful. There are also many expressions in the English language which denote the sinister meaning that black has held for centuries. There are the words "blackmail" and "blackball" and "blackleg". A scoundrel is called a "blackguard". The judge wears a "black cap" when condemning a murderer to be hanged, and witchcraft and necromancy have long been known as the Black Art from the assumption that black was the devil's colour. The worshippers of Satan are said to hold black masses.

Because of its mysterious and unknown quality black is also regarded as the symbol of ignorance and evil (cf. *The Psychology and Tradition of Colour*). Similar implications occur very frequently in folklore and legend. In *Morte d'Arthur*, for example, the most crafty and powerful opponent with whom the good knight Sir Gareth is confronted is the Black Knight. William Blake wrote in his *Songs of Innocence*—

My mother bore me in a southern wild,  
And I am black, but O my soul is white,  
White as an angel is the English child,  
But I am black as though bereaved of light.



propensities of the black man play a prominent part.<sup>1</sup> It is difficult, however, to separate the significant elements in this respect from other facets of the general cultural background. Many school books mention coloured peoples only in terms of cannibalism, polygamy, etc.; the screen provides representations of the Negro which are rarely anything but servile or grotesque;<sup>2</sup> and in not a few examples of popular literature Negro characters personify, as often as not, the qualities of virility and animalism more than any others.

## 5. ECONOMIC COMPETITION AND COLOUR-CLASS-CONSCIOUSNESS

It is almost needless to say that a more important and extensive form of antipathy and prejudice arises out of economic competition, and, as already mentioned, the depressed condition of the shipping industry has been an important focal point in that respect.<sup>3</sup> It is likewise obvious that many of the prejudices of hotel and lodging-house keepers are derived directly from the fear of upsetting their white customers by admitting a coloured guest. As the manager of a large London hotel is reported to have declared in a recent incident, "For myself, I don't care whether they are black or white or green or yellow; I only carry on the hotel to meet the requirements of the patrons".<sup>4</sup> The further ramifications of this aspect of the matter, colour-bar practices, rentals, letting of houses, etc., have already been

<sup>1</sup> cf. W. R. Titterton; "From Theatre to Music Hall" (quoted in *Britain by Mass-Observation*):

"With the passing of the old healthy, sensual (but not sensuous) English dances came the rushing in of alien elements; chiefest and most deadly, the cake-walk tells us why the negro and white can never lie down together. It is a grotesque, savage, and lustful heathen dance, quite proper in Ashanti, but shocking on the boards of a London hall."

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix II. "A Note on the Cinema and Racial Attitudes." cf. also B. Lasker, *The Racial Attitudes of Children*.

<sup>3</sup> Is it a nice sight, as I walk through the south end of the city of Liverpool, to find a black settlement, a black body of men—I am not saying a word about their colour—all doing well, and a white body of men who faced the horrors of war, walking the streets unemployed? Is it a nice sight to see Lascars trotting up the Scotland Road, and round Cardiff, and to see Chinamen walking along in the affluence that men of the sea are able to get by constant employment, while Britishers are walking the streets and going to the public assistance committees?" (Mr. Logan, M.P., in a debate in the House of Commons, 1934, on the shipping industry, *Hansard*, vol. 295. It should, perhaps, be added that Mr. Logan's attack is directed mainly against the alleged practice of displacing British seamen with cheaper alien labour, in British ships.)

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in the *Manchester Guardian*, Sept. 1943, in reference to the Constantine incident (quoted in footnote above, p. 224).

described in dealing with the Cardiff community, and we may here pass on to discuss the no less important implications of social prejudice as a further English attitude in this connection.

Some English persons believe that they will jeopardize, if not lose, their social status in the eyes of their friends and acquaintances by association with a coloured person.<sup>1</sup> Their reaction might be likened to the hesitation shown by a fashionable or highly class-conscious person at being seen talking in public to someone who is shabbily dressed or who speaks with a socially unacceptable accent. It may aptly be described as colour-class-consciousness. A woman clerk, asked to explain what the reaction in her home would be to the introduction of coloured people, said: "My mother would say, 'Please don't bring those people again, otherwise you will get us a bad name' ". A bank manager living in a select part of the town strongly objected to the idea of two African students occupying the house next door to him (his own property), and added, partly in parenthesis, partly in apology, "Oh, I know these days we are all supposed to be equal".

Fairly similar objections on the grounds of social prestige and status may be found among working-class people. A labourer pointed out that in his home Indians would be classed as "niggers", and added that his brother, who was in Egypt with the R.A.F., was very disdainful of the "Wogs". A boot and shoe operative, asked to say if a coloured man could live in his house, pointed out that however sympathetic he might be towards the idea, it was impossible to overlook the fact that he and his wife had to live in harmony with their friends and neighbours, if all was to be well. To go against public opinion, rightly or wrongly, might mean a drop in their social position.

"It may be thought that to working class people like ourselves, living in a working class locality, such things as social status would be of little value, but it is quite reasonable to assume that to be cut or ignored by one's acquaintances is felt just as much here as in any other of the social stratifications of our community."

<sup>1</sup> Though it would be difficult to say to what extent attitudes involving the social inferiority of the coloured man in this country derive from the political status of the Colonies themselves, the implications can be seen in various other and cultural forms. There is a prolific use in official and other announcements of such expressions as "trusteeship", "backward peoples", etc. "To have" or "own" Colonies is a favourite expression, and one observes the same feature in an occasional newspaper caption, such as "We gave it (Java) back to Holland". Advertisements sometimes typify this in a slightly different way. A well-known firm of tobacco manufacturers announce that their mixture is smoked "even on the Edge of Nowhere", i.e. in Waziristan.

Similar points are brought out in the study of the Cardiff coloured community. Amongst audiences of soldiers to whom the writer spoke on the "colour problem", there was obviously a strong desire that coloured people (in the abstract) should be treated on terms of equality, and yet at the same time an equally strong reluctance to face the logical implications of equal opportunity, e.g. the possibility of having to obey coloured officers. One speaker made this point very clear when he quoted an instance when the men had refused to obey even a white French officer. Another, and usually smaller section of the audience, who had actually had first-hand contact with coloured people on service abroad, were rather more positive in their attitude that the coloured man was either inferior or "repulsive" (mainly, so far as could be gathered, owing to his different culture) and should be treated accordingly. Somewhat similar implications of social status in a working-class *milieu* are made evident by the following communication from the same boot and shoe operative (a W.E.A. student). He suggests that working-class prejudice, however, would be short-lived:

Just what strain a coloured lodger would put upon our relations with our neighbours, or rather our neighbours' relations with us, is difficult to estimate. We feel that the chances are all against our being openly cut or insulted in any way; it is far more likely that our neighbours would discuss the matter behind our backs; as a result of this they (our neighbours) would not care to be seen talking or calling on us in the usual manner. This condition is likely to be of a temporary nature; it would probably end after one or two neighbours had called for change for the meter or some other such convenience. In short, whilst a coloured lodger would be likely to cause some loss in social prestige, the loss would not be of such a nature as to cause any very serious inconvenience.

This form of social prejudice seems to be linked up very closely with the fear of intermarriage, more particularly of an English woman with a coloured man. On this point the correspondent quoted goes on to remark:

We can imagine what the comments of our neighbours would be if we took in a coloured lodger along with a daughter of marriageable age. People would shake their heads and say it was disgraceful, and say that we were lacking in our duty to our children. We mention this last point because in our particular situation, the sex factor need not be considered of great importance. As we are now, a coloured visitor would affect us but little in this respect; however, say he started walking out with the girl across the road, it would be a much more serious matter for the girl. However innocent such an affair may be, we feel sure that the girl would go down quickly in the estimation of our neighbours. For a girl to walk out with a coloured man would mean a very

definite loss in social standing; the girl would be generally considered to be a very loose and undesirable sort of person.

Discussing the same subject, a middle-class correspondent of the *Spectator* wrote:

To come to concrete facts, householders with opportunities for arranging social amenities hesitate to throw open their hospitality unreservedly to individuals of races who, they believe, will mistake their welcome as an implicit invitation to form attachments to their young hosts and hostesses.<sup>1</sup>

A single woman of thirty, asked her attitude in respect to some coloured soldiers who had recently been billeted in her town, replied that she would like to be friendly towards them, but "in K . . . no nice girl could invite back a coloured soldier".

## 6. THE QUESTION OF INTERMARRIAGE

There is no doubt that prejudice is most quickly and emotionally aroused by relations between white females and coloured males. The replies and comments of audiences of soldiers to whom the writer spoke were quite succinct in this respect. Several speakers said that they had no objection to coloured people in England "in their own place", but that they should leave white girls alone. Many other English people make this or a similar point if they speak without diffidence. The questions of "contamination" and of "lowering" the race were again often raised, and give point to the contention that the real objection or aversion may be to a lowering of the social status of the group or family to which the person belongs, rather than to the sexual implications of a marriage or of racial mixture.<sup>2</sup> Other men spoke of the emotional effect the sight of a white girl with a

<sup>1</sup> *Spectator*, 1931.

<sup>2</sup> cf. in this respect the following remarks of R. E. Park:

"One principle which seems to have been everywhere operative in determining the amount of miscegenation that anywhere exists, as well as the various permutations and patterns of race relations dependent on it, has been the principle of hypergamy, as it is called in India. This is a rule which in Hindu Law prescribes that a woman may only marry into a caste that is equal to, or higher than, the one in which she is born. . . ."

"The principle which is thus recognised in Hindu custom and law seems to be a principle in human nature—one of those principles which operate spontaneously and needs no formal legislation to insure its enforcement. It is the principle which is represented in the familiar phrase: 'How would you like to have your daughter marry a Negro?' a phrase which possibly has its counterpart elsewhere. . . ."

"Race Relations and Frontiers," in *Race and Culture Contacts*.

coloured man had on them, and this point is frequently raised even by official spokesmen and other apologists over relevant issues:

I regret the action of those proprietors of dancing halls and restaurants. They are, however, private people and, in the first place, they are running their establishments for commercial purposes. If they find that those commercial purposes are advanced by excluding or placing restrictions on certain patrons, they doubtless consider that they have a right to do so, from the commercial point of view. It will be noticed that these cases always have reference to establishments where dancing takes place; but this is really part of the larger question of the relations of the sexes in this country with those of other races. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Other empirical data also clearly indicated this aspect of the matter. A woman labour manager, aged 25, asked what kind of reception coloured guests introduced into her home would receive, replied that it would be as favourable as that accorded to any other visitor, but if there were any indications of an "affair" developing, visits might be discouraged. A woman typist aged 29 pointed out similarly that there would be no encouragement to continue such a friendship, and another young woman said that, while her parents would not object to a coloured person entering their home, they would not wish him to come frequently. A schoolmaster (age 46) disapproved of social contacts between English people and Chinese and Indians "in theory". Another schoolmaster, whose disapproval of coloured people entering his home "is based on 8 to 10 years' experience of Zulus in South Africa and secondhand information from an Indian civilian", is "very strongly against any social contacts which run any risk of encouraging or permitting mixed marriages between the coloured and white races". He believes that such affairs are disastrous to both sides, but has no objection to coloured people in their own country and in their own place.

An objective appraisal of this point of view must recognise that the "dangers" of mixed marriages pass so readily as popular currency that it might be fairer to regard them as social attitudes rather than personal rationalisations. When the assumption regarding the harmful effect of hybridisation has been made socially and is transmitted as part of the cultural heritage, it is invidious to assume that an individual attitude on this point necessarily arises out of "intellectual dishonesty". What Lasker has noted in respect of the "engraving" of racial attitudes on the child

<sup>1</sup> Drummond Shiels in House of Commons—*Hansard*.

is no less true of the adult.<sup>1</sup> In the circumstances, granting that his objection will receive the sanction of surrounding opinion, it is difficult to see how a conscientious parent could help but demur at a son's or daughter's contracting an alliance of this kind. It is no less obvious that in most cases the "rationalisation" is made from a confusion of cultural with biological evidence. This consideration undoubtedly helps to account for, if it does not entirely explain, the very typical remark of an English mother that she had no objection to introducing coloured people in her home, but "having seen results of intermarrying with West Indians" had a great objection to intermarriage with any coloured person, and thought that difficulties might arise in respect of her daughter.

It has certainly to be recognised that a very large number of English people regard racial intermixture as biologically as well as socially disastrous. Popular knowledge on the subject of human heredity has not yet emerged from the mystical stage, as current beliefs about the "science" of phrenology indicate: even the blood, despite all the outcry against German racialist philosophy, is often thought to fulfil the function more scientifically and prosaically attributed to the germ plasm.<sup>2</sup>

Nor is this popular outlook surprising when reputable men of science in Britain have added their condemnation, often in emotional terms, of "hybridisation"—

Hence, it is difficult to imagine why Sir Arthur Keith, ignoring the generally known evidence of history and anthropology, assumes that cross-breeding between Europeans, Negroes and Mongols, even if such monstrous miscegenation were universal, would afford "the sole way of establishing peace and good will."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bruno Lasker, *Racial Attitudes of Children*.

"The race attitudes of the average adolescent are the combined result of so many voluntary and involuntary teachings that in so far as they seem permanently engraved at that time of life . . . it is no longer possible to distinguish the various causative factors, or to evaluate them."

<sup>2</sup> See the present writer's letter in *Nature*, Feb. 1942. The compiler of a book on modern magic and mystical beliefs would find much material in contemporary explanations of heredity. Jung's "racial consciousness" seems to have been widely disseminated and accepted in the genetical sense, and Lombroso's criminal type, and the "inheritance" of moral traits form part of everyday language. As an example of this kind of fiction, Mrs. Garland Anderson tells the story of an acquaintance who was informed by a young doctor that if ever she allowed herself to become intimate with a Negro at any time in her life, even if on one occasion only, and should later marry a white man, she would never be free of this taint (even though years had elapsed) and would probably have a black child. (Doris Garland Anderson, *Nigger Lover*, p. 190.)

<sup>3</sup> Professor Elliot Smith in an article in the *Spectator*, 1931. Professor J. W. Gregory has an article in the same periodical a few weeks earlier, in the same strain.

## 7. THE APPEAL TO "INNATE" AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Another form of prejudice is sometimes advanced on the score of "innate" and cultural differences. In substantiation of this, it is frequently declared that some kind of natural aversion exists between different racial groups, or, more positively, that Man possesses some instinct of clannishness which is the "incipient stage of specific aversion".<sup>1</sup> Such arguments carried to their logical conclusion would mean, presumably, that individuals born of different racial groups, as, for example, Africans and English people, arrive in the world with some inherent biological quality which gives them by reason of their racial differentiation incipient aversion for each other.<sup>2</sup> Commenting on the "Colour Prejudice" question, an editorial in *West Africa* remarks:

In the reports of various Colonial Departments, how often do we find reference to the fact that the most difficult part of the lot of the pioneer is to overcome the prejudice or fear felt quite naturally by the indigenous people for the newcomer? Missionaries tell the same story. Such colour prejudice is but natural and, human nature being what it is, it is no surprise to find it in "White" and "Coloured" without discrimination. . . .

Nor does this apply only between "black" and "white". The writer, in the previous war, had a similar experience with American doctors who were acquiring experience in British military hospitals. Upon arrival, the first question put was not "What was the matter?" but "We are American doctors, do you mind being examined and treated by non-British officers?"—a clear recognition of the possibility of *racial* susceptibility. (My italics.)

<sup>1</sup> Sir Arthur Keith. "On Certain Factors concerned in the Evolution of Human Races," *I.R.A.I.*, vol. xlv, 1916.

<sup>2</sup> On this question, Lapiere and Farnsworth comment as follows: "Since the date of J. B. Watson's classical experiments on the new-born, data have accumulated which indicate that few if any defensive or other responses characterize the infant at birth. . . . The behaviour in the main is generalized and diffuse, being particularized at a much later date." (Lapiere and Farnsworth, *Social Psychology*.)

Lasker (*op. cit.*, pp. 369-70) remarks:—

"As soon as we survey the variety of such (racial) aversions—even when we limit ourselves to content only and overlook the variety of forms—we discover no single instinct, nor even a keyboard of instincts, can explain so mixed an assortment of reactions. Modern psychological research here comes to our rescue and confirms our suspicion that much which people have been assumed to be born with in mental habits has really been acquired—and sometimes quite painfully—in the early years of life. . . .

"Nevertheless, it remains an open question, which scientific observation and testing has failed so far to answer, whether normally physical difference does create a distinctive sense, either of aversion, or of special attraction. In other words, the part played by instinct in race feeling, if it plays a part at all, is probably smaller in child life than in the later stages of adolescence and young adulthood; and whatever may be the outcome of further studies of innate reactions of that kind we already know that among the total environmental influences upon the child's race feelings they almost disappear into insignificance."

The "strangeness" of the coloured person as well as cultural differences are often quoted as reason for prejudice. A woman teacher was unwilling to make contact because she did "not like the smell of foreigners", and a younger girl said that a coloured person would receive a kindly but condescending reception in her home on account of his being a foreigner. Another person said it was simply because coloured people "looked different" that they would meet with antagonism. The insular nature of this type of attitude was summarized by another speaker who quoted the saying that "the dagoes begin the other side of the Channel".<sup>1</sup> Another Englishman remarked that the arrival of evacuees in his village had nearly caused a revolution, let alone the question of coloured people being received there.

Other people explain their attitudes or prejudices towards coloured people more deliberately, and often apologetically in terms of difference in habits and customs. A member of the A.T.S., for example, asked if coloured people knew how to behave "socially", and frequent comments and inquiries on this matter were received from audiences of soldiers. A more fundamental "objection" on the score of the position and status of women in coloured communities is also met with on some occasions. A woman writing in the *Spectator* (April 1931) remarks:

I have no prejudice against colour, but I strongly object to the treatment of my sex by the majority of coloured people. When I see a veiled woman, it is as if she shouted at me "My menfolk are barbarians".

A somewhat similar point is made also by a member of the male sex, and in it may perhaps be seen an interesting illustration of the principle of hypergamy previously referred to:

Equality of status between Englishmen and Indians would involve the admission of Indians on an equal status with ourselves with our women; that is what gives us pause. Indians cannot but look on our women as they do on their own; naturally they are at liberty to treat their women as they like, and the method they adopt is entirely their own affair, but equality of status would involve free intermarriage between the two races. Once married to an Indian, an Englishwoman would find herself in the same position as an Indian woman, and that is what we wish to avoid.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The writer was once informed by an Esthonian girl who came to England without knowing the language that, until she saw the words in print, she had always assumed that the expression "damned foreigner" was a single word.

<sup>2</sup> Correspondence in *The Spectator*, 1934.



## 8. FAVOURABLE ATTITUDES—EMOTIVE AND IDEOLOGICAL

Favourable attitudes towards the coloured man, and the Negro in particular, are as varied in character as unfavourable and prejudicial ones. It is interesting, too, to find that social considerations, somewhat similar to those quoted above, often modify the favourable kind with the proviso, for example, that coloured people "should keep their place". A labourer correspondent was prepared to treat them as he would his own race, but would be "annoyed if they were 'cocky' ". A schoolmaster, strongly in favour of fair treatment for the African, referred to a statement by a West Indian, a popular local character, in which the latter was alleged to have declared that, if the coloured members of the Empire were not voluntarily accorded equality, they would seek it in a more militant way. The informant did not think such words consonant with the "sportsman" he knew the speaker to be, and described them as "truculent".

Similar implications are much more definite on the subject of intermarriage even when the person concerned would otherwise countenance the idea of social relationships between white and black. A well-known missionary spokesman argues most strongly for "mutual respect and friendliness" between Africans and Europeans, but is against intermarriage on the ground that cultural and traditional differences make its fulfilment difficult.<sup>1</sup> Both favourable and less favourable attitudes on this matter tend, in fact, to lend additional force to Stratton's theory, that racial prejudice is a passing outcome of a need of defence, an attitude of emotional guardedness of race toward race, a group reaction to threatened or experienced losses.<sup>2</sup>

Other sympathetic attitudes are subject to further methodological difficulties of interpretation,<sup>3</sup> as when they are displayed as a concomitant of what is known in Marxian language as the "class-struggle". Since he is conceptually the victim of the same exploitative and economic agencies as themselves, the holders

<sup>1</sup> G. W. Broomfield, *Colour Conflict: Race Relations in Africa*, pp. 126-39. The fact that difficulties over cultural mixture within the *same* racial group are raised less often at the present time is perhaps an indication that the race problem is succeeding the class problem in importance so far as this country is concerned.

<sup>2</sup> G. M. Stratton, *Social Psychology of International Conduct*, 1929, pp. 45-65.

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of such pitfalls see Raymond Firth, *Sociological Review*, vol. 31 (quoted in chapter 1).

of such views regard the coloured person as a member of what Sumner would call their "In-group". Thus sometimes, by sponsoring the coloured cause, they are able to find an outlet for their political sympathies as well as their frustrations and dissatisfactions.<sup>1</sup> A "Serving Soldier's Wife" wrote in a daily newspaper that "the insult to Learie Constantine is a boomerang which hits every man and woman serving their countries in this war. Is this a foretaste of the democracy to come?"

In a somewhat similar sense, the extent to which such favourable attitudes are bound up with emotive factors is shown by the warmth with which the cause of the coloured against the white American soldier was taken up in a number of British rural areas. It was said that the white American had too much money to spend, that his manners were bad, his habits objectionable, and that he was unfair to the coloured soldier.<sup>2</sup> Many of the English townspeople where coloured troops were stationed, asserted strongly that they "preferred" the coloured Americans to the white. They spoke approvingly of their courtesy, and noted the "Blackies" as being especially "careful", "reserved", "self-controlled" and "disciplined", and construed the situation in terms of the Negro troops having been "cowed" by past inter-racial experiences in the States. Subsequently, with the development of social and sex contacts in their logical form, epithets seem to have become modified to a type more usual to the prevailing racial situation in this country. As a rider to this, an Englishman wrote in *The Times*:

I am the manager of a snack bar in Oxford and have had a rather un-

<sup>1</sup> This point is brought out also in the questions which are asked at Labour, Rotary and other meetings addressed by coloured speakers. The Secretary of the League of Coloured Peoples reports that among other enquiries he received the following:

"Are the right men sent out to the Colonies?"

"Are there too many pukka-sahibs in the Colonies?"

"Why was forced labour introduced into the Colonies where there is no popular representation?"

<sup>2</sup> When, for example, white Americans remonstrated with a landlady for serving coloured customers in her public house, her reply, "Their money is as good as yours, and we prefer their company", is quite significant. A public house in Bristol is said to have anticipated such measures by the display of a notice reading "Only blacks served here".

There is no doubt that these anti-white attitudes were considerably enhanced by various segregative "orders" as well as by requests from the American military authorities to the effect that white and coloured troops should not use the same civilian canteens or other places of entertainment. (cf. K. L. Little in a letter to the *New Statesman and Nation*, August, 1942.)

fortunate state of affairs which is beginning to exist in this country brought very forcibly to my notice. The other night a coloured U.S. soldier came into our establishment and very diffidently presented me with an open letter from his commanding officer, explaining that "Pte. — is a soldier in the U.S. Army, and it is necessary that he sometimes has a meal, which he has on occasion found difficult to obtain. I would be grateful if you would look after him."

Naturally we looked after him to the best of our ability, but I could not help feeling ashamed that in a country where even stray dogs are "looked after" by special societies, a citizen of the world, who is fighting the world's battle for freedom and equality, should have found it necessary to place himself in this humiliating position. Had there been the slightest objection from other customers, I should not have had any hesitation in asking them all to leave. . . .

Other sympathetic attitudes among English people are based on abstract principles of a more conventional nature, such as Christianity, as well as on individual ethical codes. A housewife, aged 37, remarked that

It is only in recent years that I really bothered about (coloured people) . . . because the impression we were given in school, and also in church, was that they were alright as a people to preach religion to, or to have as servants, but companions—it wasn't done. How far this is altered now, I don't quite know, but I try to teach my children to take a friendly interest in everyone, irrespective of race or creed. Surely, if God is the Father and Maker of everyone, there should be no such thing as Colour Bar?

A young man, a farm labourer, takes an even more idealistic view:

I should like to be present at a High Mass where the priest, deacon, and subdeacon were (in any order) black, white, and yellow: and I should like to receive the Blessed Sacrament from the hands of a coloured priest. This would declare the catholicity of the Church and show that all are one in Christ.

Another individual, a railway clerk, remarks, somewhat self-consciously perhaps, that as chairman of a Branch of the International Friendship League he had influenced his mother and father so that

"they would be prepared to see the best in any coloured person although feeling a little self-embarrassed at first,"

and another Englishwoman points out that

"as a family we try to believe that social conduct and education can make for world-wide co-operation."

Still another person observes, perhaps with more conviction than intuition, that he "always says that a nigger is a white man painted black".

## 9. EMPIRICISM IN RACIAL RELATIONSHIPS

Some English people are empirical rather than ideological or prejudiced in their approach to this matter. A Congregational Minister points out that he has

mixed socially and played tennis with a number of coloured people and haven't felt any different reaction from meeting with white people. The whole reaction depends upon the type of person. . . .

A watch repairer says:

I have mixed a little with (coloured people) and have known some, and socially they have not seemed to be different to others of the white race, and better than some of the white people I have known, but then I have not mixed with them under their Native Conditions.

Others stress the fact that their reaction to coloured people depends on the individual rather than the race of the person in question. A young woman aged 26, whose opinion is mostly derived from meeting Indians and one Japanese at college and at lectures and discussions, has realised that they are "exactly the same in their make-up as any other human being". After the initial "shyness" had worn off, a Civil Servant thinks, he would more or less forget colour and "regard them as ordinary persons". This attitude is amplified considerably in the remarks of an English writer in the *Negro Anthology*, and it characterizes, in particular, a large number of the *intelligentsia*.<sup>1</sup> It is on the increase, also, in other circles. We may note in the same connection that the holding of liberal attitudes on the colour question ranks to some extent as the criterion of higher-class membership in some sub-divisions of the social system—

My relations with Negroes are exactly the same as my relations with anyone else, of any colour whatsoever; that is, they are relations with individuals, simply. There are no nuances peculiar to my friendships with coloured men and women, other than the allowances which one must make for any psychological variation from one's own race-type; and this applies equally to any friend one may have who is not of the same European race as oneself. There are, naturally enough, a number of Negroes whom I have met, with whom I have nothing whatever in common, in just the same way that I have nothing in common with a number of my fellow-countrymen. . . .

I am perpetually reminded in conversations with Negroes that I have only to close my eyes for it to be impossible for me to discover the pigmentation of the person to whom I am talking.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> cf. *Empire*, and other publications of the Fabian Colonial Bureau.

<sup>2</sup> Anthony Butts in *The Negro Anthology*, p. 549.

Other English people are attracted to Negroes and other coloured peoples for reasons it is less easy to classify. With some it is the musical and artistic talent of various Negro artists, such as Paul Robeson; or the music of Negro spirituals. Some admire the cricketing abilities of West Indian teams, and of Indian players. Others admire and are attracted by the physical looks of Indians, Malays, etc. With a further small group, it is the good humour with which many Negro people accept a joke at their own expense which is their main recommendation.

#### 10. PRESENT TREND OF LIBERALISM

The fact that relatively few English people have made close contact with coloured individuals means that it is as difficult to assess the real content of sympathetic as of antipathetic attitudes towards them. There is no doubt that a great deal of latent friendliness underlies the surface appearance of apathy and even of displayed prejudice in a large number of cases, and many instances could be quoted of personal contacts having produced a striking "conversion" in this respect on the part of the English individual or individuals concerned. Naturally, in the circumstances, this is far more common when the coloured person is well-educated.<sup>1</sup> There are also many English people in every section of society who display a complete absence of colour-awareness as well as of colour prejudice, and who claim, probably correctly, that they have given the problem of white-coloured contacts so little thought as to be virtually unaware of its existence. Particularly at the universities, so far as can be gathered, the process of "normal" interactions is on the increase, and is modified only by a sense of "shyness" in some instances and by the "older" attitudes of parents.<sup>2</sup> Concrete examples of this occur in the fairly recent appointment of West Indians on successive occasions as President of the Oxford Union, of a West African as President of the Philosophical Society of Trinity College, Dublin, and of individual

<sup>1</sup> Officials of welfare organisations to whom African students are sent for training in the Vacation, frequently express quite a considerable degree of astonishment at the fact that their visitors not only speak "such good English", but are as "intelligent" as the English students met with in the course of similar activities.

<sup>2</sup> This point has been made to the present writer by elderly Englishwomen, pointing out quite objectively that they are unable to shake off their "old-fashioned ideas" about coloured people.

West Africans to undergraduate positions of importance in various Cambridge colleges, while the participation of coloured students in university sport is so well known as hardly to require mention.<sup>1</sup> The existence of various voluntary societies and organisations to provide hospitality for coloured visitors is another index of similar favourable attitudes.

Again, as already mentioned, within the mixed dockland communities social intercourse between white and coloured neighbours is the rule rather than the exception, and a further interesting sidelight on the wider aspects of this matter might be quoted in the case of Hull. The coloured population there is small, and it is sociologically significant that, from the point of view of the townspeople, it constitutes no special "problem". The writer paid visits to some dozen boarding establishments and private hotels, as in Cardiff (see section 1 of the Chapter on *Sociology*), and in answer to similar enquiries about accommodation for a coloured person received favourable replies in most cases.<sup>2</sup>

In commenting finally, therefore, on the Englishman's attitude towards coloured people in this country, these considerations should be borne in mind, as well as the possibility of methodological disabilities on the part of their investigator. It is quite evident that the course of the war and greatly increased political and press prompting, along with the presence of large numbers of coloured troops, have, in the last few years, stimulated public interest very considerably. Just as in the converse situation of prejudice, many English individuals who have never personally met a coloured man have had their attention and their interest aroused. In the broader sense, too, the traditional mainspring of Negro friendship, vested institutionally in Nonconformity and the missionary societies, provides a fairly continuous and far-reaching undercurrent of liberalism.<sup>3</sup> All this, along with the ideological reasons for waging the Second World war, has made a great contribution on the side of sympathy and friendliness, and although many such attitudes are vague enough to be described

<sup>1</sup>For example, a West African recently captained the Oxford University Football XI and a West Indian the Cricket XI of the London School of Economics.

<sup>2</sup>These remarks are based on a short stay in Hull during which there was opportunity of making fairly wide enquiries on the subject in question.

<sup>3</sup>In October, 1943, the Conference of British Missionary Societies tabled the "Colour Bar" as a subject for discussion and attention at its annual conference.

as potential rather than actual, they bespeak a trend which may have considerable effect on the future relations of black and white in Great Britain. In his own academic capacity, the present writer has received in recent years a great many enquiries on the "colour question",<sup>1</sup> as well as requests for introductions to West African and other coloured "nationalities", and for coloured speakers to address public meetings. The experiences of individual coloured persons themselves, particularly if they are in the popular eye, strikingly confirm the same point in some instances. Allowing even for certain methodological difficulties in the interpretation of these developments, there is no doubt that English "resistance" has broken down considerably during the War, and that mutual respect is on the increase, though somewhat slowly.

## II. SUMMARY

In summarizing the attitudes and impressions quoted above, it may be said that English people display for the most part tolerant if somewhat prejudicial ideas regarding coloured people. Many of these ideas, attitudes and notions are very generalized, and as a rule do not become markedly antipathetic or antagonistic unless some form of actual social or physical contact with a coloured person seems likely to take place. In this respect, the question of intermarriage seems of paramount importance. Nevertheless, it is a moot point whether the unfavourable reactions promoted do not in fact derive from the implications of other attributes, in particular of the low status of coloured persons in Britain and of various rather vague and repellent characteristics and associations. Though held rather widely, such prejudices, with the exception of "superiority attitudes", do not seem to be strongly ingrained, and in the case of many English people seem capable of considerable modification, if not total elimination.

The differing type of contact which the Englishman may have with coloured people seems to make a considerable difference in his impressions and in his reactions towards them as a whole. This process of arguing from the particular to the general is a

<sup>1</sup> In reply to two letters which appeared respectively in the *Manchester Guardian* and *The Times* offering a copy of a forthcoming Report on the educational aspects of the "colour question" (see previous footnote), the present writer received more than 150 requests, mainly from persons with educational and semi-public connections.

very familiar one. It is almost invidious to point out that it is rendered the easier when, as in the present case, all members of the favourably or unfavourably affected group are recognizable by a distinctive trait, such as their colour. In the case of racial prejudice,

Physical differences serve as indices to the inferior group, marking its members as strangers and accelerating or symbolizing the really fundamental differences . . . it is easier to detect the enemy when certain quantitative differences mark him; it is easier to attack him when these differences are readily pointed out.<sup>1</sup>

Without speculating too far, it seems fairly obvious that the most unfavourable impressions have been gained by English people living abroad in Colonial countries, or by those whose contacts with coloured people have been made in terms of the dockland populations of this country. On the other hand, contacts with coloured persons of "good class", in England, appear usually to have left a very favourable impression, particularly where the person concerned showed ability to participate successfully in English social customs, including athletics,<sup>2</sup> or displayed a class outlook judged to be appropriate. Various sources of information, such as books, historical literature, lectures, the cinema,<sup>3</sup> etc., are all likely media in cases of both favourable and unfavourable impressions, and the same applies in regard to missionaries and friends who are living or have lived abroad. Probably the effect of primary and face to face contacts is fairly positive and definite in affecting subsequent attitudes, but it is impossible to gauge specifically either these or the former considerations. Nevertheless, it is largely on that basis, as well as more subtly and fundamentally, perhaps, on the broader basis of the English social heritage (as described in the preceding chapter), that the coloured man is seen through the eyes of most English people.

<sup>1</sup> F. Brown, *op. cit.* Compare this remark with Hitler's use of the yellow star of David for Jews, and the habit in certain towns in the American South of printing the names of Negroes in the telephone directory with asterisks attached.

<sup>2</sup> As a schoolmaster correspondent puts it in reference to a Japanese family: "the two boys were good footballers and so could mix easily with the rest". The same point is often made by coloured folk themselves in explaining their social acceptance by English people.

<sup>3</sup> For a brief review of the part of the Cinema in this respect, see Appendix II.



## CHAPTER 10

## THE COLOURED MAN'S REACTION TO THE ENGLISH

## I. INTRODUCTION

In addition to the several thousands of West Africans, West Indians, Arabs, Indians, Chinese, etc., who, as seamen, have made permanent or temporary homes in the ports, other coloured "immigrants" into Great Britain comprise several hundreds of university students, a number of professional people, doctors and lawyers from various "coloured" countries of the Empire; numbers of men and women, mostly from the West Indies, in various branches of the entertainment industry; and others fulfilling private or miscellaneous rôles in a variety of occupations from wardens of hostels to racecourse touts. During the Second World war, the total was substantially increased by the arrival of over one thousand technical and skilled workers from the Colonies to work mainly in British ordnance and aircraft factories. In addition, several hundreds of foresters from British Honduras worked at camps in Scotland and northern England.

Excluding the Colonial 'enclaves' in Cardiff, Liverpool and other ports, the great majority of coloured people are temporary residents, but the stay of nearly all, including the war workers, lasts at least three years or even longer. The students arrive at ages varying from 18 to as old as 45. Practically all of them have received a secondary education in some school at home, very often a missionary one, and occasionally in Britain itself, and quite a large proportion have reached the Intermediate standard of London University before their arrival. Nigeria, with a population nearly seven times as large as that of any other colony in British West Africa, sends the largest number, followed by the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and other West and East African Colonies. Most West Indian students come from the largest island, Jamaica, others from British Guiana on the mainland, or from the smaller islands of St. Lucia, Antigua, Barbados, etc., and some from Bermuda. Other non-European students are headed in numbers by Indians, who until very recently constituted by far the largest proportion of all non-Europeans at British universities. There are

also much smaller numbers of Chinese, Malays, Iraqis, Egyptians, etc. Most of the African and West Indian students study law and medicine; up to the present a relatively small number have taken courses in such subjects as natural sciences, engineering, economics, theology, arts, sociology, and anthropology.<sup>1</sup> Women students come over almost entirely to study nursing and hygiene, but a few also take arts courses, medicine or education. The women read relatively rarely for university degrees, and take their training mainly at the London hospitals.<sup>2</sup>

Most of these students come from homes which, by Colonial and West African standards in particular, must be reckoned wealthy. Even if a Government or other scholarship is won, the expense of living in England for three, sometimes four or more years, requires substantial assistance from home. For non-scholarship scholars it may be reckoned that the cost of such an English education at, say, Oxford or Cambridge, will entail a capital outlay of rather more than £1,000. At other universities, bearing in mind the fact that a medical course is longer than most, the expenses of quite a number of students will hardly be less.<sup>3</sup> In general, therefore, it may be said that most of these young men and women, whether from the West Indies or West Africa, come from homes which enjoy quite a high standard of living by local standards.

The next group, that of professional men, is a small but more or less permanent one. Most of them have studied as well as lived and practised in England, some of them for thirty years or more. Several have married English wives and brought up families, and established close and important connections in English life. They represent a small but fairly "assimilated" group. In the remaining groups, status and length of stay are apt to be as variable as occupation. Quite a number, however, enjoy a high standard of living. The last and most transient group, the West Indian technicians, represent in the main an

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* The reason given for this relative disregard of courses other than medicine and law is in the main an economic and political one: that the posts to which they should lead are very restricted and are filled largely by Europeans.

<sup>2</sup> A new and recent departure in this respect is the institution by the Colonial Office of a Colonial Social Science training course, carried on under the auspices of the London School of Economics. Some forty men and women from various Colonial countries are at present taking this (1944).

<sup>3</sup> Misunderstanding on this point in the past has meant that individual students have been unable to finish their courses, and in a few cases have literally been stranded in Britain.

artisan class. Some, but by no means all, have received a secondary education, as well as a training in some technical skill. In general the social background of most of them may be said to approximate to that of what in England is called "lower middle class".

## 2. THE WEST INDIAN AND AFRICAN BACKGROUNDS

Though nearly all the African students come from homes in the towns of the Coastal area, their "European" experience is varied. Some, who have attended boarding schools such as Achimota, have been brought up on thoroughly English lines, much like those of an English public school. At the same time as they speak and take pride in their own African tongue, Yoruba, Fanti, Twi, etc., their manner of speaking English differs but little from that of an English boy of similar education and social status. The educational course they have followed is the same in most respects as that of an English school. They take the same examinations in almost the same subjects, and participate broadly in the same games and leisure-time activities as an English boy. They are fairly cognizant, not only of English customs and etiquette, but of the general and less subtle psychological implications of English culture. To a greater extent the same applies to other Africans whose parents were educated in England, and who follow in all essential details European customs and practices in their homes. Other students have a slightly different background. They come from homes which, though largely Europeanized, still follow a number of African customs and forms of social etiquette, and in which an African language rather than English is the usual medium of communication. The last group in particular find some difficulty in settling down "socially" in England. Their pronunciation and in some cases their understanding of English is not quite so good. They are less familiar with English notions of hospitality, and with minor points of social etiquette and conversational technique. These factors make against them mainly in terms of social intercourse with English people, and tend to set up obstacles.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> One minor instance of "misunderstanding" in this respect arises from the greater degree of deference paid to older people in West Africa by the young, and is responsible for giving English hosts the impression that individual young Africans are unwilling or unable to converse freely with them.

Africans of both categories come to England, in the main, with a marked desire, acquired educationally and in other ways on the West Coast, to emulate even more purposefully European standards of behaviour, incentives, and goals. The privilege as well as the prestige of belonging to the British Empire has in most cases been strongly impressed on them. But anxious as they are to aspire to European and English notions of prestige, they are aware, from both general and personal knowledge of the attitude and behaviour of various British officials and others on the Coast, that a certain amount of "distance" still separates them from that goal. Most of them, therefore, are ambitious, African-conscious to some extent, a little uncertain of their position, and particularly resentful on racial as well as social grounds of anything which savours of prejudice and discrimination.

An attitude somewhat, though not distinctly, different obtains in the case of the West Indians. The Colonies from which they come, Jamaica and Barbados in particular, have been Europeanized, or rather "anglicised", for several hundreds of years. As the descendants of Africans who were torn away from their native culture, present and preceding generations of coloured West Indians have never known any recognized culture other than an English one. English is the native and universal language of the West Indies, and English customs, notions of etiquette and social behaviour have been accepted and followed in "good class" West Indian homes for nearly a century. Education, too, in West Indian schools is entirely on English lines, and the school curricula show few if any divergences from those of an English secondary school. West Indians are not only taught to regard themselves as members of one of the oldest of British colonies, but are proud to think of themselves as British citizens. It is fairly common for the coloured Jamaican to look upon England, not merely as his Mother country, but as the "Homeland", and to speak familiarly of going to England as "going home".<sup>1</sup> Such attitudes are a direct result of the presence of the white planters and Creoles, whose values and standards have been largely passed on and acquired, not only by their mulatto children, but by the greater proportion of the darker-skinned

<sup>1</sup>This applies also, to some extent, to the Sierra Leone Creole, whose reactions in some respects approximate closely to those of the Jamaican.

and Negro inhabitants of the West Indian islands. In that respect in particular, the background of race relations and racial consciousness is vastly and subtly different from that of the West African. In the West Indies, the lighter-skinned person through his approximation to the traditional ruling class regards himself as on a higher social plane than one of darker colour. His lighter skin marks him out in general terms as a member of a wealthier and more socially favoured group. He is colour-conscious, therefore, as well as race-conscious, and acutely so, for two reasons; because prejudice and discrimination mark him out not only as a member of an inferior race, but in certain circumstances as also a member of an inferior social class. Most West Indian students who come to England belong to the wealthier and generally lighter-skinned class. The West Indian technicians, however, are much more mixed in colour. These rather subtle distinctions between light and dark and their implications are neither known nor appreciated in England, with the result that the West Indian reaction to any obvious or imagined manifestation of prejudice is resentful, in the belief that social status in addition to race is being impugned. The results of this situation will be more obvious from the paragraphs which follow.

### 3. THE DIFFICULTIES OF INTER-RACIAL CONTACTS IN BRITAIN

Perhaps the most fundamental consideration in racial contacts in Britain is the fact that they are usually extremely limited in their nature and extent so far as coloured students, as well as even the more residential coloured population, are concerned. To a considerable extent they are restricted mainly to what may be called the categoric type, i.e., with English persons acting in some official or semi-official character, such as Government officials, university teachers, and various others, such as landladies, wardens of hostels, etc., who are performing economic and other essential services of a similar kind. Such relationships tend to be relatively impersonal, and although "normal" acquaintanceship and friendship with English people are certainly not out of the question, they are

not readily and easily engendered. Even in the case of the various welfare organizations which cater specifically for the cultivation of British and non-European relations and understanding, the process is not simply achieved. Difficulties arise from various considerations. Many English people, who are willing to offer hospitality to coloured persons, are very badly informed regarding Colonial and coloured countries and their peoples and cultures; they tend sometimes to regard the latter very much from a conventional and "superior" European angle. Others, who view the matter from a pronounced "Christian" point of view, accept the obligation more from a conception of duty than from any real interest in their guests, and some even take advantage of the opportunity to expound their own religious attitudes in an attempt at proselytization. Others, again, though willing to show friendliness towards a coloured person, hold pronounced opinions on the sexual implications of racial intercourse, and restrict or segregate their contacts accordingly.

All this obviously detracts from the possibilities of mutual respect as well as sociability. The coloured person soon becomes alive to the situation, and in the majority of cases resents it very strongly, so that the relationship does not progress very far. The broad result of all this is that, relatively isolated from anything like a reasonable cross-section of English society and opinion, the coloured person tends in not a few instances to obtain as incomplete and even as biased an impression of English people as he accuses them of having of his own. As in the converse situation of white *vis-à-vis* coloured, discussed in the last chapter, the response of the coloured man towards English people as a whole tends to no small extent to become, in a very similar sense, a reaction to a stereotype. It is important therefore that this consideration should be borne well in mind when we are examining such attitudes.

#### 4. SOME WEST INDIAN REACTIONS

As we have said, the nature of the English situation tends to hit the West Indian particularly hard in regard to social recogni-

tion and status. Colour prejudice is seldom expressed on the surface in his home country, and there are even elaborate social devices for avoiding the too direct implications of colour differences which operate in many respects like those which prevail in England over class differences. Here, for example, an "upper class" person might be very loath to associate with a working man, and might take every precaution to avoid being seen walking or talking in public with one whose speech or dress did not satisfy the requisite class and social criteria; but he would certainly not go out of his way to call him "lower class" to his face. From the point of view of most West Indians certain terms in use in England, amongst which the word "Nigger" is the most obvious, have much the same connotation as the expression "lower-class person" would have for an Englishman.<sup>1</sup> The following lines, obviously the outcome of some personal experience in this country, give some idea of the association as well as of the very acute emotional reaction that is evoked in the mind of a coloured person:

They call me "Nigger",  
Those little white urchins,  
They laughed and shouted  
As I passed along the street,  
They flung it at me:  
"Nigger! Nigger! Nigger!"

What made me keep my fingers  
From choking the words in their throats?  
What made my face grow hot,  
The blood boil in my veins  
And tears spring to my eyes?  
What made me go to my room  
And sob my heart away  
Because white urchins  
Called me "Nigger"?

What makes the dark West Indian  
Fight at being called a Nigger?  
What is there in that word  
That should strike like a dagger  
To the heart of Coloured men  
And make them wince?

<sup>1</sup> This comment does not lose sight of the fact the word "Nigger" is universally abhorrent to all coloured people. The object here is merely to indicate the depth and extent of the personal reaction evoked by this and analogous expressions in a way which is typical to a greater or less degree of most coloured people.

You of the white skinned Race  
 You who profess such innocence,  
 I'll tell you why 'tis sin to tell  
 Your offspring Coloured folk are queer,  
 Black men are bogies and inferior far  
 To any creature with a skin made white.

You who feel that you are "sprung  
 Of earth's first blood", your eyes  
 Are blinded now with arrogance.  
 With ruthlessness you scared  
 My people's flesh, and now you still  
 Would crush their very soul,  
 Add fierce insult to vilest injury.

We will not be called "Niggers"  
 Since this was the favourite curse  
 Of those who drove the Negroes  
 To their death in days of slavery.  
 "A good for nothing Nigger,"  
 "Only one more Nigger gone"  
 They would repeat as though  
 He were a chicken or a rat.  
 That word then meant contempt,  
 All that was low and base,  
 And too refined for lower animals.

In later years when singing Negroes  
 Caused white men to laugh,  
 And show some interest in their art  
 They talked of "Nigger Minstrels",  
 And patronised the Negro,  
 And laughing at his songs  
 They could in nowise see  
 The thorns that pierced his heart.  
 "Nigger" was raised then to a Burlesque Show  
 And thus from Curse to Clown progressed,  
 A coloured man was cause for merriment.  
 And though to-day he soars in every field  
 Some shrunken souls still say  
 "Look at the Nigger there"  
 As though they saw a green bloodhound  
 Or a pink puppy.

God keep my soul from hating such mean souls,  
 God keep my soul from hating  
 Those who preach the Christ  
 And say with churlish smile  
 "This place is not for 'Niggers'."  
 God save their souls from this great sin  
 Of hurting human hearts that live  
 And think and feel in unison  
 With all humanity.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Una Marson, "Nigger" (quoted in *The Keys*, vol. I, 1, 1933).



The first batch of technicians to arrive in the 1939 war were housed in a hostel at Liverpool.<sup>1</sup> For a variety of reasons this was not a success. Some of the reasons which were a preliminary to a long chain of discord are referred to by the then warden, an Englishman, in the following words:

"It is on the social side that the experiment has singularly failed. The volunteers were undoubtedly inspired with a real sense of patriotism when they came here. They really believed that Britain was in need of their technical skill, and that they were performing a genuine service by coming here. Their 6,000-mile sea journey was no light undertaking, and they were not unaware of its hazards. It is not surprising therefore that they should have expected to meet with a certain sense of obligation in the Mother Country. This they have conspicuously failed to encounter. It is true that there can be no complaint that the official welcome afforded to each contingent on its arrival lacked warmth. It is against their experience in the factories, and especially their experiences as British citizens attempting to create a social life for themselves in a new country, that their criticism is directed.

"The basis of their sense of injury is twofold. Firstly, racial discrimination —'colour bar'—has led most of them into very unfortunate experiences. In the case of the third contingent, within six hours of arriving in Liverpool, three of them had been excluded from a popular dance hall, and one of them refused service in an hotel, expressly on grounds of colour."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The hostel in question was selected partly from expediency, owing to the housing shortage in Liverpool due to recent bombing, and was situated in a part of the town very close to the coloured community. This in itself immediately brought the technicians into association in the popular mind with the local coloured people. In respect to these, and other West Indian technicians taken elsewhere, further difficulties derived from industrial as well as cultural reasons. Jamaican technical standards are different from English ones, and the lines between the trades are less clearly demarcated. For example, in Jamaica, a man can be a good welder and a good mechanic as well, and this fact led to some misunderstanding over the placing of the men in England. After a period of training some of the West Indians were due for a rise in pay: the increase was overlooked, and was not forthcoming until they had lodged a strong complaint. Most of them joined Trade Unions, but in the case of the electric welders, difficulties arose over Jamaicans who were unable to prove that they had served a *bona fide* apprenticeship. There were complaints from some of the technicians regarding a colour bar in the factories, and counter-complaints from some of their employers of undue absenteeism; the latter was put down by the men themselves to the difficulty of getting used to the cold winter weather. Difficulties increased at some of the hostels, notably at one in Liverpool. The men complained, some more vociferously than others, of inadequate and badly-cooked meals; of the regulations in force, of the accommodation itself, and repeatedly of the various wardens, both white and coloured, sent to look after them. How far the whole situation was exacerbated by external factors is not easy to say.

It is, perhaps, significant that in a hostel at Birkenhead, where white and coloured lodgers were mixed, there was a relatively peaceful atmosphere. Possibly in the Liverpool case, apart from other reasons, the effect of a virtual "segregation" of the West Indians in one house showed itself psychologically in the exaggeration of internal causes and as a form of "safety valve" for difficulties outside.

(cf. *West Indian Workers in Gt. Britain*, Arnold R. Watson, Hodder and Stoughton, 1942.) The comment in the last paragraph is by the present writer.

<sup>2</sup> Alex Watkinson, *Time and Time*, July 1942.

## 5. VARIOUS TYPES OF DISCRIMINATION AND THEIR REPERCUSSIONS

Difficulties in finding lodgings as well as work are often recounted by Africans and West Indians, and are substantiated in general by factual studies,<sup>1</sup> as well as by the experience of most English persons who at any time have sought to book such accommodation.<sup>2</sup> An English observer, who has come into close and continuous contact with foreign and coloured students from all parts of the world, remarks:

"The African or West Indian student has an even worse time (than the Indian student), for he is darker skinned than many Indians and suffers more, probably, from the colour bar. English people in buses or trains will get up and move to other seats if a coloured person sits next to them; very often a coloured man searching for lodgings will find the door slammed in his face. There are hotels, dance halls, and restaurants who will refuse him admittance."<sup>3</sup>

In the circumstances, it is the British appearance of offering equality and fair treatment to all races and peoples which both Africans and West Indians find particularly galling:

"In America they tell you frankly where you are and are not wanted by means of big signs, and they don't try to hide their feelings. But in England, though the people will never say what they feel about us, you come up against incidents which hurt so much you cannot talk about them."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix—"An Aspect of the Colour Bar in Britain."

<sup>2</sup> Compare also *I Rise*, by Rollo Ahmed, a book which, its author claims, is based on personal experience.

"It was one thing to search; quite another thing to find. I had not expected equality in England, but neither was I prepared for a colour-bar. As soon as doors opened, and the maids or proprietors saw me standing there, excuses were made. Liverpool was apparently full to overflowing. They were very sorry, there was no room. 'Sorry, full up'. And the door banged.

"'No room to-night. Call again in the morning.'

"'Are you alone? Sorry, we don't take single coloured gentlemen.'

"There was a little notice-board fixed to one door, and peering at it by the light of a street lamp, I read:

"'No Jews. No coloured people.'"

The above quotation recapitulates very reasonably the kind of situation referred to above. An even more galling situation from the point of view of the coloured person concerned is when, after booking a room in his English name, the landlady turns him away on his arrival, after seeing his colour. The evidence on this point is very extensive, but brevity does not permit of a recital of its ramifications.

<sup>3</sup> Mary Trevelyan, *From the Ends of the Earth*, 1942.

<sup>4</sup> Miss Una Marson at a British Commonwealth League Conference (1934).

"Miss Una Marson described the case of a coloured girl who came to England with her parents to be a nurse. The girl applied at 28 hospitals, but they all turned her down. One secretary (of a hospital) said: 'While we have no official colour bar no coloured girl would stand an earthly chance of becoming a nurse with us. . . . We have no objection to coloured nurses, but people in the East End have very strong colour prejudices.' Inquiries support the allegation made by Miss Marson." *Newspaper Chronicle*. Quoted in *The Keys*, vol. 2, no. 1, 1934.

An African expresses his disillusion in similar terms:

"I thought that on leaving South Africa for England I was at the same time leaving the infamous colour bar behind and was coming to the paradise of freedom. Since my arrival here I have been quite disillusioned on this point. . . .

"The coloured races in South Africa think that the colour bar is a purely local affair and that England, as the centre of the Empire, is the last place where it would be tolerated. The treatment of the coloured people in London almost forces one to believe that colour bar is the policy of the British Empire."<sup>1</sup>

With others, particularly those who have been reared under strong missionary and Christian influence, it is the conflict between the ideals they have been taught to look for and to expect, and the reality of the situation, which affects them most. An ex-theological student from West Africa puts the case as follows:

"So far as your correspondent is able to ascertain, the African has become reconciled to the treatment of landladies and hotel managers. Those people profess no ideal other than that of money-making, and if their customers from whom they derive most of their profits object to the presence of a coloured man they (landladies and hotel managers) have no course open to them other than that of bolting the door against the unwanted. . . .

"What gives the African a shock from which he seldom recovers is when he realises that those who boast of idealism in their relationship with him, and in whom he had trusted, have been treating him in a way contrary to the lofty sentiments they profess. I refer to the Government and the Church. . . ."<sup>2</sup>

West Indians and West Africans repeatedly stress the inconsistency of British policy, and the ambiguity in that respect of their own position; particularly when it comes to finding employment. There is, in fact, a saying fairly common among Negro people that "in the States, a Negro is the last to be hired and the first to be fired; in England, he isn't even hired".

It is generally known that at present no coloured boy or girl can procure a job in an office no matter how qualified he or she may be. Indeed, as a matter of fact, they cannot secure a job in any capacity whatsoever. No engineering works will employ them and apart from shipping they have no other outlet. Have you seen any thus employed?

If a coloured medical student should fail for any reason to receive his usual remittances from home, he cannot, however willing as he may be, secure any job in Britain which will enable him to secure sufficient money to keep himself and see himself through. If he were an American coloured citizen he could do so, but Britain finds some objection to employing a man of colour even though she plumes herself with the thought that she isn't so bad as America in this matter of colour.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> Rev. E. N. Jones in a letter to the *Spectator*, April 1931.

<sup>3</sup> *The Keys*, 1935.

Expressions of benevolence on the part of English people, references to the legality of the position of the British coloured subject, and other protestations lead only to further exasperation:

. . . the absence of legal discrimination is no guarantee of equality of opportunity. When a brilliant medical student seeks to gain post-graduate experience as a house surgeon in an English hospital but finds that hardly any hospital in the Kingdom will give him his chance, it is cold comfort to know that there is no law preventing Negroes from becoming surgeons in British hospitals. Nor is his humour improved by the apology that no Negro is entitled to such a chance until the race proves itself fit by producing some world-famous surgeons.<sup>1</sup>

It was such circumstances as these, apparently, which prompted the League of Coloured Peoples to take up relief work among coloured people who had come to England to look for employment, "after having been deceived into believing that there was no colour or race prejudice here, and that all British subjects were made welcome with open arms and given as good a chance as the natives of this country". The Association reported about this time (1939) frequent cases of people in good circumstances, sometimes Colonial officials, who on leaving the Colonies bring with them to England servants or nurses for their children, with the verbal promise of repatriation after one or two years, or if they cannot stand the climate. "These girls are often left on the streets, and their employers disclaim all responsibility for their repatriation."<sup>2</sup>

## 6. FURTHER IMPLICATIONS OF RACIAL SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

Hardly less irritating to both West African and West Indian visitors to this country than any overt manifestation of colour bar or colour prejudice is the "curiosity" of white people as well as the fairly constant battery of questions, often well intended, and from the point of view of their posers entirely harmless.<sup>3</sup> These have mainly to do with the supposed abundance of wild animals, the climatic conditions, and the "uncivilized" behaviour of the "natives" of the Colonies, including cannibalism. Two

<sup>1</sup> *The Keys*, vol. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *The Keys*, (1935).

<sup>3</sup> "The spontaneous reaction of children in the streets, who so frequently call out 'Look at the nigger' without any real intention of being insulting, and the well-meaning tactlessness of women of all ages who want to 'touch a nigger for luck'." Watkinson, *op. cit.*

young African students recount their impressions of this type of curiosity in the following words:

We have come across many in this country to whom the mere mention of the word "Africa" reflects all sorts of stories which they have heard or read. . . . It is no exaggeration to say that quite a number of people believe that Africa is a continent swarming with snakes, lions, leopards, crocodiles and such like. A friend once informed one of us that his Uncle, who works as a doctor in Accra, told him that people had to carry guns about in order to defend themselves from lions and other wild animals. One day, the story goes on, they were playing tennis when snakes issued suddenly from the bush, swallowed the balls, and disappeared. . . . We have also heard all sorts of stories about the "excessive heat" in Africa; it is so hot, one story goes, that only wood can be used in making bridges, for metal will melt under the blazing sun. There is also a story of a careless African woman who, returning from market, dropped her basket. By the time she had finished picking up the other things she had in the basket some broken eggs by being exposed to the heat had become cooked! Last year, we met a young missionary going out to West Africa for the first time. She was very pleased to be going to the only place in Nigeria where a piano exists for any length of time. The strings apparently melt!<sup>1</sup>

West Indians, in particular, are annoyed by being asked if they speak English.<sup>2</sup> A Gold Coastian summarizes his reactions as follows:

It does not take him long to find out he is regarded as a savage even by the starving unemployed who ask him for alms. Amusing questions are often put to him as to whether he wore clothes before he came to England; whether wild animals wandered at large in the streets of his native town. He concludes that the people of the class to which his landlady belongs are, to say the least, poorly informed as to the peoples of other Countries, especially of those parts known as "the Colonies". . . . At the educational establishments he notices that there is no better information possessed by his fellow students respecting "natives" in "The Colonies" than is possessed by those less educated; the only difference is that the better educated people ask questions that are less rude.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Excerpts from a Cambridge College magazine.

<sup>2</sup> Watkinson, *op. cit.* "Their experience since they came here has led them to conclude that hardly anybody in Britain knows even where Jamaica is, and they are continually infuriated by the obvious surprise that they speak English, which is, of course, their native tongue.

"I am very fond of reading books of travel. Travel in Africa specially appealed to me. None of the comforts of civilization! No trains; a spice of danger; snakes—which I detest; rats—which I dislike about as much; the strange and reprehensible habits of the natives; West Africa, the White Man's Grave! If I went there, I might even not come back. I might die alone in the jungle, and the jackals or something might devour my mortal remains. . . .

"There are not many books about the Cameroons, but all those I read talked about the hardships of journeying there, the wretchedness of fever, the hippos and crocodiles that waited for me every time one crossed a river. . . .

"Alas! the books misled me, as they doubtless misled the friends who said good-bye to me with an evident admiration of my heroism which was flattering." F. Clement C. Egerton, *African Majesty*, pp. xvi-xvii.

<sup>3</sup> cf. Kobina Sekyi in the *Negro Anthology*, pp. 774-9. A very interesting psychological study of a present-day young Gold Coastian who has been educated in the English manner (see also footnote below).

## 7. DISILLUSION AND DISAPPOINTMENT

Many coloured people feel that the Englishman's "superiority" attitude towards them is an intrinsic element in the situation, and not a few are disposed to generalize about it, sometimes with a considerable amount of conscious irony:

This much at least must be said of the English—that they are not unduly aggressive or blatantly rude. They are no doubt a well-mannered nation. They realize it is not polite to lynch. The English attitude is more dignified—condescending in its kindness, patronizing in its tolerance. The English are prepared to overlook what they regard as this great tragedy of human nature, and even to extend an occasional hand of welcome, so long as everything is done with reason and discretion. Beneath a suave exterior there is always the feeling that men are classified by nature into those who are white and those who are coloured. These two divisions are to many Englishmen fundamental in the classification of men. There is also a deep-rooted conviction that of the two the white races are in every respect superior, and against such a conviction, which is almost a faith, the coloured man finds it futile to argue.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, the realization of the situation, and their non-acceptance in English society, comes to some almost as a surprise. The West Indian sense of disillusionment is characteristically more bitter than the African:

We, who are taught to love thee, hold thee dear,  
Think of thy welfare as our very own,  
Die for thee, honour thee, and love thee well,  
The British name, the King upon the throne,  
With eager hearts we came to our Fatherland  
To know; with loyalty, and love and honour grown  
Out of distance. With hopes from youth held dear,  
To find too soon these hopes for ever flown. . . .

Oh, that she still would give us cause to love,  
Sadly we turn from all the pomp and state,  
True loyalty dies hard, and sadness leaves.  
(We do not let ourselves descend to hate)  
We go a disillusioned British host,  
Back to the lands from which we came of late,  
For ever broken by our welcome here,  
And all the bitter insults that we meet.<sup>2</sup>

The West African, on the other hand, feels disappointment mainly because the reality of first-hand contact with English and European civilization has not fulfilled what it promised.

<sup>1</sup> D. F. Kanaka in the *Spectator*, 1934, "The Colour Bar in Britain". Kanaka was the first Indian to hold the position of President of the Oxford Union.

<sup>2</sup> Sylvia Lowe, *Disillusionment* ("After seeing 'The Trooping of the Colour'"), vol. I, no. 2. *The Keys*, 1933.

Some, more intuitively, feel resentment as much at themselves and their countrymen for being misled into a superficial imitation of European externals as with the English for offering and yet denying these things to them. The final readjustment is sometimes, but not always, a philosophical one, and the following piece of autobiography by a semi-"anglicized" Fanti man shows how considerations of pride also weigh in the matter:

Nevertheless, there are certain things against which Kwesi's soul rebels. He is convinced more or less that the only way of escaping the domination of aliens is by acquiring the refined tastes of the dominating aliens; yet he does not feel satisfied about these same tastes. In the first place he soon begins to distinguish the various distinct grades of society in England. . . . In the second place, the Fanti ideal of womanhood which somehow has taken root in his soul makes it impossible for him to replace it with the English ideal of womanhood. Kwesi finds that in spite of the attractiveness of their get-up and other allurements, while girls are to him no more than part of the white man's land. Moreover, he feels that at the back of every white girl's mind is the idea that she is conferring a favour on any black man with whom she associates. Kwesi possesses that unique African pride which is seldom appreciated by non-Africans, often mis-called insolence by white men; so he has little to do with white girls, unless and in so far as they treat him as a woman treats a man, and not as a white woman thinks she should treat a black man. . . .<sup>1</sup>

## 8. SOME EXAMPLES OF "HYPERSENSITIVITY"

The reactions of other coloured people to English life and behaviour are manifold and extremely variable, and depend largely on the psychology and social background of the person concerned. With some it is the restriction on sociability which affects them most. Others who are more sensitive give up speedily and entirely any attempt to fraternize with or to meet white people. Often, imagining ostracism and coldness where neither was intended, they draw back into a hard shell of cynicism and racial antagonism. An Indian himself puts the latter point rather lucidly:

The Colour Bar from without, which is the result of the attitude of the white races, leads to a Colour Bar from within which is of his own creation. He instinctively holds back from certain things. He is afraid of being humiliated. He is so terribly sensitive, and always anxious to preserve his self-respect which even colour cannot bar.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sekyi, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Kanaka, *op. cit.*

A similar view is expressed by an English observer:

The coloured man or girl had their own particular fear of the daily insults and slights from white people, or of walking into some hotel or restaurant and being turned out again. Underneath their good manners and charm many of these Africans, West Indians and Indian students had been deeply hurt. Later, I was to see the same look in the eyes and hear the same chance remark from the refugees from Nazi oppression.<sup>1</sup>

In a few cases, withdrawal closely approaches a serious condition. The individual shuns not only all social gatherings and convivial occasions, but tries, more or less successfully, to keep himself away from popular gaze, by shunning as far as practicable visits to shops, cinemas, and any other form of public gathering. The effect can produce a specific as well as a general effect on his psychological state. He may develop an almost morbid fear of coming into anything like close proximity with a white person, particularly a woman.<sup>2</sup> He will avoid travelling alone in a railway carriage, lest a woman enter, and will refuse under any circumstances to walk in the street with a white member of the opposite sex. To some extent this attitude derives, so far as the more sensitive coloured person is concerned, from the sexual concomitant of race relations in this country to which he is inordinately alive.<sup>3</sup>

The psychological outcome of such circumstances may be not dissimilar from the condition clinically classifiable as neurasthenia. Just as in a recognized state of neurosis the subject suffers from a conglomeration of groundless fears regarding himself and his health, and gradually loses all self-confidence and initiative, the sufferer in cases of racial conflict may, as a result of an intensive reaction to the colour situation, develop a similar complex, showing itself in various forms of minor physical ailment.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Trevelyan, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Compare this condition with the analogous symptoms exhibited in the converse situation by a white person, as described on page 229.

<sup>3</sup> "In England I know that the Negro has a very definite social appeal, and a very great charm for many white women. In fact, this is so much the case, that I have often been ashamed of the way women of all classes, but notably in the smarter social sets of London, have almost offered themselves to Negroes whom I know personally. It appears that white women are foolish enough to consider such a condescension should be an honour, just because they happen to be white. This is a great mistake, at least in London, where the few Negroes who mix in the social life are attractive and popular enough to be able to pick and choose should they wish to do so." Doris Garland Anderson, *Nigger Lover*, p. 195.

<sup>4</sup> A study of contemporary North American sociological literature bears out the psychological effects of racial conflict on individual personality to a striking extent.



## 9. THE POLITICAL "SAFETY-VALVE"

The most obvious and perhaps most satisfactory outlet for emotion in these and similar cases is political activity. Sometimes it is coupled with an intense suspicion of official intentions. The English government official, who comes in contact only with the overt manifestations of such resentment, is prone to regard the African's or the West Indian's violent reaction to colour prejudice merely as an excuse for, or possibly a rationalization of, nationalist or political frustration. This is far from being the complete explanation of the case. Indeed, many coloured people, quite apart from racial or national consciousness, are not fully alive to the political implications of the situation until some particular incident or set of circumstances has aroused their awareness in this respect. In a fair number of cases it is the purely personal set-back, the sudden and unexpected shock to "amour-propre", which is the main, if not the sole, causal agent in this matter:

Imagine the feelings of a young African, never before away from home, but educated in an English mission school. He has been baptized and confirmed and taught that England is a great Christian country. . . . Is it any wonder that he looks puzzled and bewildered, like a child that has been smacked by a grown-up without being aware of what he has done wrong? At first he feels dimly that the thing is unfair, and then, as he learns the kind of treatment he has to expect, he becomes deeply, irretrievably hurt. Very often he becomes bitter to the depths of his soul. When he goes home again, some years older and more hardened to life, will he describe in glowing colours a great free, democratic Mother Country to which he is proud to belong?<sup>1</sup>

Just occasionally the conflict experience is striking enough to be quoted in full. The African ordinand mentioned on page 257, relates one such incident as follows:

Some years ago your correspondent studied at Oxford for the ministry of the Church. After completing his studies the Principal of his Hall wrote to the Bishop of . . . asking his lordship whether he would be willing to ordain him should he succeed in securing a curacy in his lordship's diocese. His lordship replied that on no account would he lay his hands on a black man's head! Another bishop preached at the University church and told his audience that there were about thirty parishes in his diocese which were being run single-handed; if any student was contemplating taking Orders, he should think of his diocese. After the service the writer approached his lordship and told him that he would like to work in one of those parishes in order to gain

<sup>1</sup> Trevelyan, *op. cit.*

some knowledge of parochial work before returning home. The bishop took his name and address. Within a fortnight he received a letter stating that owing to the colour of his race, his lordship could not ordain him! In fairness to the Church, your correspondent must say that after two years he at last found a bishop who was Christian enough to ordain him. However, conditions were made that the ordination would hold good only "for the Colonies". So much for "The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man".<sup>1</sup>

But more often it is the small and seemingly unimportant incident, the denial of a landlady that she has a room to let after it had been advertised by a notice in her window; a chance snub, even a chance remark, which is the cause of the trouble, rather than some major act of racial intolerance, such as a lynching in the Southern States, or an anti-coloured Act in South Africa. Why the "pin-prick" should be felt most keenly, it is perhaps not so difficult to understand. In the first place, it occurs in a country which, unlike the United States of America or South Africa, does not own any distinction of race or creed, but, on the contrary, as Mother Country of a huge "coloured" empire, purports to offer equality to all. In the second place, and largely as a result of these circumstances, the West African or West Indian feels such slights when they occur not as something objective, impersonal, and even abstract, over which neither he nor the white person concerned has any control, but rather as a deliberate and personal piece of discrimination on the latter's part.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jones, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> A personal affront seems to have been largely responsible for another young African's rather strong reaction, which he records in the following piece of autobiography:

"In my boyhood days . . . I had always had visions of coming to the 'Mother Country' for professional training. I always looked forward to my undergraduate days in London, so it was perhaps not unnatural that among my pen-friends scattered all over the world I specially welcomed one in London.

"My friend happened to be a shorthand typist two years my junior, and she had her home in Acton. We had been in correspondence for two and a half years before I left my native Africa in the confident hope that on arriving in London I wouldn't be a perfect stranger to all the eight million inhabitants, for I knew one at least by correspondence. Within a few months after my arrival, however, I soon found out that Margaret was as much a stranger as any *fräulein* in the Rhineland—a fact borne out by the fact that we have not met. . . . During my first two months, Margaret and I were still in correspondence, for soon after my arrival I had to write to her in reply to a letter of hers forwarded to me. I soon stopped writing, having come to the conclusion that the only social contact we could have must of necessity be on the basis of pen-friendship. . . ." (The writer goes on to describe how he eventually became friendly with a German boy and how the friendship was renewed when the latter returned from Canada after a period of internment. He concludes) "We are still very friendly. In fact 'X' is the only 'Aryan' among my friends. There are undoubtedly several deductions to be made from these my two earliest impressions; but as no intellectual feat is involved in making such deductions I shall refrain.

The dynamic forms which such more violent reactions take vary also according to the African or West Indian outlook. The Africans translate their emotion into demands for the speedy elevation of the political status of their country; in part as fulfilment of their patriotic aspirations; in part, on the reasoned assumption that equal political status abroad will enhance their own individual social status in this country.

Both West Africans and West Indians usually feel very strongly that British professions of liberalism should be expressed in prompt and positive action. There is a great deal of impatience with English attitudes which deplore colour prejudice and colour bar practices but which envisage no alteration, either by racial education or in other ways, to the existing situation.

#### 10. INTER-RACIAL CO-OPERATION AN INDIVIDUAL AFFAIR

Strenuous efforts are made in some respects for the convenience and comfort of coloured visitors, and strict equality of treatment in the economic as in the social sense is not infrequently accorded. Nor do these things necessarily go unappreciated by the coloured individuals concerned. Coloured persons who have been more fortunate in their English contacts are as a rule correspondingly more disposed to analysis both of them and of their fellows, and often strike a balance which on the whole is favourable towards their "hosts". A not infrequent comment in this respect is that there are some well-bred English people who, if they feel prejudice, at least do not show it,<sup>1</sup> and this in its context is a far greater admission than would appear.

A lighter-skinned university student who had spent several years in Britain and travelled fairly extensively, remarked on the absence of prejudice encountered in rural Wales, and in a Welsh

"In conclusion, however, I should like to re-emphasize that they are early, strong and indelible, and as such they will always live with me, to be passed on to posterity."  
(Documentary material.)

<sup>1</sup> Probably the main criterion and qualification from the coloured point of view is a complete absence of "superiority" in attitude or air on the part of the English person concerned. An African who was asked to provide an English person with a testimonial in respect to employment the latter was seeking in West Africa wrote: "X is almost the only Englishman I have ever met who can talk to an African without making him feel inferior".

town, where, as he puts it, he was no more a stranger than the "foreigners" from Birmingham, i.e. "the English holiday crowd". Though highly conscious of prejudice in many instances he found the Y.M.C.A. atmosphere on the whole a friendly one, and travelling about the country on his motor-cycle he was not, so far as he could gather, refused lodgings on account of his colour. He is inclined to conclude that familiarity "or rather more politely, better acquaintance" did alter the attitudes of those he had to deal with.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From documentary material. The following more detailed excerpts from this piece of autobiography provide a fairly adequate conception of the reactions of coloured opinion on this subject. It will be noted, incidentally, that this correspondent is lighter-skinned, and there is probably no doubt that this fact has some bearing on the relatively favourable reception reported.

*Documentary Material.*—"The variety of reactions to colour alone in the parts of the British Isles with which I am acquainted is so striking as to seem to defy any formula. A few tentative generalisations, however, are suggested by my experience: that the Welsh, Irish, Scotch and English display colour-prejudice in an ascending order of degree; that British class-stratification goes a considerable way to explain prejudice; that the larger communities—cities—tend to be foci of prejudice; that, *ceteris paribus*, the south of England is more hostile than the north; that a realisation of common interests, political or sporting, for example, tends to mitigate prejudice very greatly; that British prejudice against strangers in general is merely transformed in degree when colour is the issue; that colour prejudice is to be largely attributed to the peculiar caricature of the coloured man which the average Britisher has conjured up from his only source of information, the Yellow Press, the flicks, and the sensation-mongering travel books, that basically, status varies with degree of colour and ostensible spending power, not with personal qualities.

"A brief résumé of certain features of my stay in Britain may serve to show the grounds for these conclusions; I will refer to my various places of residence, my University life, my special interests and the social relationships ensuing from them. My first year I spent in London. . . . One could not speak of any marked colour prejudice in the Y.M.C.A.; the membership was very cosmopolitan, the residents were either students or office workers, in either case away from home, without fixed associations and ready to mix, at 18 I was quite adaptable. But even here I noticed that most English fellows I knew really well were North of England, that it was much easier to maintain contact with other West Indians and Indians, that the Irish seemed rather congenial, that there was genuinely something called 'English reserve' against which the Continentals kicked as much as I did. My most regular European associates, three or four Scotch and English members of our chess team who played basket-ball as well (I played both), were Scandinavians, who were even more critical of the English than I was. On the whole, the Y.M.C.A. atmosphere was a friendly one. There was colour prejudice about; fellows with whom I got on quite well couldn't stand the sight of an Indian, so to speak, but I never came up against it there.

"But a London college gave me my first real dose of it. From the very start I found myself noting deliberate little acts of what I now term 'aggression', pointed avoidances, ignoring of casual salutations, looks, semi-hostile remarks. I found the cross-country crowd so unpleasant that I left them to join the Y.M.C.A. Harriers. Even in the College Chess Club, which was rather unfriendly (the Chess Captain was a German Jew) I found that I was placed lower down than my playing strength suggested, so much so that I had not a single loss for the whole season. No matter in what direction I turned, Union Dances, History Society teas, I found in general the same subtle manifestation of social antagonism.

" . . . F . . . Hous e I found obsessed with an adulation for Indians, rather friendly towards Chinese, but graded Negro traits as being more or less at the bottom of the

By some coloured individuals antipathy is never displayed, and probably is not felt. Instances of this rather rare phenomenon have already been quoted in reference to the Loudoun Square community. Again, of course, the whole situation is bound up with individual psychology and social background and experience, and frequently in such cases the strong Christian convictions of the person concerned are largely responsible. Other coloured individuals, too, make a very conscious and deliberate distinction in the case of individual English people whom they like and

scale, even if for constitutional purposes they had to be accepted within the pale. The majority of the Club members were English, but this social stratification seemed to be accepted by all and sundry.

"About X House and my West Indian circle of acquaintances and friends only two remarks seem pertinent. I found most of them suffering from the pressure of British colour-prejudice much more acutely than I was. I myself spent most of my time away from coloured people during this my stay in London and was not subject to that in-breeding of conviction on colour questions which marks an X House habitué.

"This part of my stay in London was comparatively pleasant, and the jolts I suffered all took place within a narrow and sheltered sphere. I hardly ever went anywhere without several other people, usually Europeans of one country or another, and never felt terribly out of place. Apart from the clubs and colleges named above, my activities were confined to playing chess . . . (and) cross-country running with the Y.M.C.A. Harriers, and I found that the people I came up against in various matters were invariably decent and open.

"I lived for six months after this in a house in Hampstead. There were fourteen of us living here with two English graduates—husband and wife. All of us were 'foreigners' but one. We lived a sort of community life, which seemed quite good for a while. Most of my old contacts remained, but travelling to and from Hampstead made me much more observant of the attitudes of casual observers, and I received an impression of an almost unvarying aversion, of a not very deep character, the manifestation of which varied from avoidance of proximity in buses to *sotto voce* remarks.

"It is clear that my impressions during this time were confined within narrow limits. I knew as many people as I wanted to know, and I had a secure 'base of operations', I was aware of aversion and prejudice, and flashed out into a bit of a temper over 'incidents' now and then, but on the whole took little notice. I was only once out of London for any length of time, for ten days at Hastings, where I found a much more friendly and less impersonal atmosphere than I had in London.

"My . . . year in a Welsh town was in general a cheerful one. To the average denizens of the place I was no more of a stranger than the 'foreigners' from Birmingham, i.e. the English summer holiday crowd. I can hardly say that at any time during my stay in Wales did I notice anything that I could construe as colour-prejudice. Not that there was an absence of colour-awareness. I never went further south than Abergavenny and Crickhowell, and never more than thirty miles north of Aberystwyth, but I was around a good deal on my motor-cycle and I can only say that the change from London shocked me. Only among English students evacuated was I ever made to feel that I was an object of prejudice on account of my colour. I could give some interesting detailed comparisons and labour the point a good deal more, but it seems hardly necessary to do so. Even the attitude of children visibly changed as one motor-cycled from London. . . . Along A40 up to Gloucester one could feel the tense atmosphere in town and village as one passed through; as one got into Wales fingers were no longer pointed contemptuously and rude noises were no longer heard. The contrast was sharp, supercilious contempt as against inquisitive friendliness.

"Travelling distances with a motor cycle meant that I put up at the strangest

respect, and in describing such persons to a fellow member of the race will often refer to them as "all right", or as "one of us", or even semi-facetiously as an "honorary African". The significance of these expressions can be appreciated in terms of their context.<sup>1</sup> Nor should it be inferred from what has been said that coloured people in this country are oblivious to the efforts made and the hardships sometimes incurred by individual English people on their behalf in terms of advice, hospitality and active participation in matters of inter-racial controversy. Their responses are often whole-hearted and sincere, but the fact that, generally speaking, they are not racial attitudes in the sense of being displayed towards a *group* of people, prohibits their being classified as such.

## II. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The nature of the situation in England is such that individual coloured people, generally speaking, do not have access to anything like a representative cross-section of English people and English opinion. The unpleasant experiences of individuals inevitably tend to aggravate this situation, and to make their victims less willing to seek other white contacts, which possibly would modify their hardening views about English people in general. Emotional factors usually play a large part in this. Discrimination and aloofness are often suspected where they were

places for the night sometimes. It also meant an interlude in hospital, where I recuperated for a week from shock and got an interesting insight into reactions. In the few big hotels where I did put up, I spent my time in splendid isolation. In one place where there was a small common room in an 'exclusive' hotel, my presence was tacitly overlooked by a rather charming group of people who spent their time trying to find out whether any of the others knew of any of their friends. On the whole, it did not seem as if I was ever refused lodgings for the night for reason of colour, though I would not be sure. In hospital the nurses were very friendly; I had to spend a Christmas there, so I was well looked after. Some of the superior townfolk came in to see the poor people who were in bed and a few risked their reputations in addressing a few words to me in the style of a pukka sahib and its feminine, whatever that may be, though the rest carefully overlooked my existence. Even the 'politesse' of the nurses, that robot-like charm the profession exudes, seemed a trifle cynical in the light of this, and I thenceforth refused to relax from an iron politeness."

<sup>1</sup>It has to be stressed that, psychologically speaking, members of the opposing sides are sharply demarcated by their attitudes and behaviour, and there can be no division of loyalty any more than in actual warfare. It is perhaps significant that conventional terms such as "pro-African" are never used, presumably because they do not properly describe the whole-hearted identification indicated by the above expressions, which, incidentally, provide a striking illustration of the sociological significance and mechanism of W. G. Sumner's "In-Group" and "We-Sentiment" conceptions (*The Folkways*).

never intended, and not infrequently the coloured person concerned develops a racial prejudice against white people which is even more violent than anything met with on the other side. Group solidarity<sup>1</sup> is quite generally increased among coloured people in this country, whatever their origin, through a feeling of mutual sympathy which tends, though only partially, to transcend other loyalties of class, country, and even tribe. For similar reasons, the "colour question" becomes a subject of considerable intrinsic and intellectual interest which even many persons with no previous or pronounced antipathy towards white people come eventually to share.

Generally, it may be said that experience of life in England acts as a fairly powerful catalyst on the ordinary coloured "immigrant", particularly so far as his attitude towards English people and his more abstract relationship with them as a member of the British Empire are concerned. Previously held ideas are either hastily and considerably accentuated, or entirely abandoned. Those who arrive with orthodox Christian views and feelings of respect for English culture tend greatly to modify them, and in some cases to become definitely hostile. In a much smaller number of cases, perhaps, the reverse is the case. For those who were already race- or colour-conscious, the effect is usually to confirm and consolidate whatever opinion was previously held, and to enhance the awareness of those concerned in terms of scepticism as much as of animosity. If relatively few coloured people develop violently anti-British attitudes in Britain, perhaps even fewer are likely to leave it with any of the sympathetic views with which they arrived.<sup>2</sup> Most, perhaps, return with a greater respect for individual English people rather than for English institutions.

The coloured person who remains or resides in this country has a longer experience of English life and social interactions, and consequently both a greater spur and, in some cases, a greater opportunity for making psychological adjustment and social

<sup>1</sup> Group solidarity shows itself in a variety of ways, and often in a negative sense, as for example, condemnation of a coloured person courting or marrying a white one; or of a defaulter on racial loyalty. In the main, its implications, as would be expected, are defensive, and unity is most strongly pronounced when it is a case of warding off an attack rather than making an assault.

<sup>2</sup> The possibility of some coloured persons arriving in this country with strong anti-white or even anti-British views cannot, of course, be omitted from consideration, but its significance as well as its extent is difficult to assess.

accommodation. His reactions, in contacts with white people, are less spontaneous and more guarded than those of the temporary visitor. He comes, sometimes, to a rare understanding of the more subtle implications of English institutions. His attitude, in consequence, tends to be more tolerant, and even philosophical in its acceptance of external and unavoidable circumstances, and hence achieves a balance in which a sense of cynicism proves the compensating and decisive weight.



# APPENDIX I

## AN ASPECT OF THE COLOUR BAR IN ENGLISH SOCIETY

### I. THE DATA AND THEIR ANALYSIS

The data on which this appendix is based were obtained from a register kept by a well-known association in this country which acts as a liaison between persons, mainly of the student class, who are seeking lodgings, and their would-be "hosts" and "hostesses", i.e. individual landladies, private individuals and families in the habit of taking paying guests, and guest houses and boarding houses. The particulars contained in this register were originally elicited from the persons concerned (the would-be "hosts" and "hostesses") either by the use of a questionnaire, or by personal inquiry. They include names, addresses, and the general terms on which accommodation is offered, and include information on such questions as nationality preferences, and willingness to accept coloured students. The register also contains information from which an approximate estimate of the social status of the families concerned can be made, and it has been checked periodically and brought up to date over the period of the last six years. In all, 701 separate cases were examined; of these some 44 per cent. had been checked in 1939 or later, and of the rest some 25 per cent. were obtained during 1938.

On the basis of these particulars the persons or cases were divided into three broad categories: (1) private families prepared to take paying guests; (2) guest houses and boarding houses; (3) landladies. In percentage terms the proportions worked out as: Private families 82.5; Guest houses, etc. 6.2; and Landladies 11.3. The sample was then classified geographically, firstly into addresses within the London Postal area (46 per cent.), and those outside it (mostly in the southern half of England) 53 per cent. These were then sub-divided as follows: *London*: Bloomsbury, or West Central; Highgate, Muswell Hill, Golders Green, Camden Town and Hendon, or North-West; Hampstead; Blackheath, Sydenham, Norwood, etc., or South-East; East

Sheen, Kew, Surbiton, or South-West; and Chelsea, Victoria, Bayswater, etc. or West. *Outside London*—Kent; Sussex; Oxford and Cambridge; Herts, Essex, Surrey and Middlesex; and the remaining southern counties of England, mainly in the south-west (with which were included some half-dozen Scottish addresses).

The replies recorded in answer to the queries "Nationality Preferred", and "Will you accept Coloured students?" were then examined and analysed into the following main categories: (a) any form of aversion to taking Coloured persons from the mere negative "No" to a fully declared prejudice; (b) the nature and extent of the aversion, and (c) actual preferences in terms of nationalities. The results of this analysis may be summarized as follows: Out of the 701 cases examined, 40.2 per cent. indicated aversion in some form to taking either Coloured students or Coloured people. The nature and extent of this aversion varied considerably, from replies which stated "Europeans only", or "Coloured might perhaps be taken" to "Any, but black" or "No Niggers". These replies, or attitudes, as they might be called, were graded in terms of their apparent intensity, and are summarized in Table 1. It will be noted that some 78 per cent. of them denote simply "No Coloured".

A further analysis of "aversion" according to the categories of person expressing them, and their geographical distribution, will be found in tables 2 and 3. It will be noted that the *London* figures show an "aversion" percentage of 44.2, which may be compared with the *extra-London* figure of 37.3 per cent.; and that some 44 per cent. of the private families (the percentages of 32.4 for landladies, and 56.4 for Guest houses being based on an insufficient number of cases cannot be regarded as statistically significant) show "aversion". It will also be noted, that when the socio-occupational categories are divided up again in terms of *London* and *extra-London* the respective percentages are consistent with the general finding. As a final analysis, "aversions" were recorded according to (a) high educational standing, i.e. persons possessing academic or professional qualifications such as university, legal or medical degrees, and (b) ministers of religion or their wives. The respective percentages of "aversion" worked out at 41.3 and 47.6. In the latter cases, however, the sample was far too small to yield statistically significant results.

Before considering the sociological implications of these data

the following additional particulars should also be noted. Out of a total of 701 cases apparently only one dozen expressed their specific preference or willingness to take Coloured persons. In 90 cases, i.e. some 13 per cent. of the whole sample, the persons concerned were apparently willing to accept guests without reservation as to race or nationality. A further 12.8 per cent. of the whole intimated a specific preference for Europeans. In 100 cases (i.e. 14.3 per cent. of the whole), the space opposite the two queries indicated above was left entirely blank or had a dash against it. The inference to be drawn from this is presumably either that the persons concerned had omitted to consider the questions, or were unwilling to commit themselves on them. Of the remaining 20 per cent., the replies comprised mainly preferences for specific European nationalities, and these are summarized in Table 4 (see also footnote to the Table). Finally, a few miscellaneous replies and attitudes are worthy of notice: "No Nazi Germans" (2); "no Germans" or "no French" (3); "no Jews" (4); "might take a highly recommended Turk"; and "no one with Nazi principles: no Coloured" (1).

## 2. DISCUSSION

One or two methodological considerations must first be noted. One of these relates to the manner in which the register itself has been compiled. In 78 per cent. of the cases which indicate some form of aversion to taking in coloured persons the remark is simply "no Coloured". It is not known whether the replies upon which this annotation is based were equally laconic, or if they offered further explanations which would make differentiation possible in terms of the wide assortment of attitudes apparent in the other 22 per cent.

A question of even greater importance relates to the exact interpretation which has been put on the term "Coloured" itself by the persons compiling the register, and more particularly by the people who actually answered the questionnaire. For the average English person it is elastic enough to cover almost any person of non-European descent, and as such would bring in both the lightest-skinned Chinese and the darkest Negro from the

Guinea coast, and possibly even the southern European. Not improbably, however, so far as the present material is concerned, actual proximity to and familiarity with a specific race or nationality were the main determinants in the choice and use of the term. For example, in London, where representatives of most of the coloured races are frequently to be seen, the expression would not doubt convey a more comprehensive meaning to the average individual than it would in an inland town, and still more so than to a person in a country district, where such contacts, both in number and diversity, are far more limited. This last point has a further bearing which, it is suggested, might explain the apparent discrepancy between the "attitudes" of the London and the non-London samples, the inference being that the lesser degree of "aversion" displayed by the latter is an index of their comparative remoteness from the problem. In short, then, in the absence of specific declaration, it is impossible to do more than surmise whether a negative answer indicates general or special antipathy for one reason or another against accommodating members of any particular race.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps the most significant consideration, however, arises from the fact that while some 13 per cent. indicated their willingness to "take any", only some 1.5 per cent. of the total answered the actual question "will you accept Coloured students" in the affirmative. In a further some 14 per cent. of the cases, this question, either by accident or design, is left unanswered, and while the remaining some 31 per cent. indicate their preferences

<sup>1</sup> A further methodological point is worth brief consideration. The questionnaire method has often been impugned for its inability to distinguish between "symbolic" and "non-symbolic" behaviour (cf. Lapiere and Farnsworth, *Social Psychology*, pp. 77-97), e.g. for asking the subject to react to an imagined situation rather than to a "real" one. It may be claimed, however, that the indirect method of the inquiry here in question has advantages which go far to counteract any such tendency. In other words, under the conditions ruling, the question "Are you willing to accept Coloured students?" presented the "subjects" with a situation with which they had every expectation of having to deal "realistically" and not academically. The contrast between this and the purely symbolic type of situation is made clear by the above authors in the following passage (*op. cit.*, p. 90):

"Apparently the chief item of news value the press of the country obtained from this book (Thorndike's *Adult Interests*) was the fact that Thorndike had asked his subjects the amount of money which could successfully bribe them to eat a stated quantity of human flesh. Both the pressmen and the subjects, at least certain of them, perceived the lack of relationship between the symbolic and the non-symbolic aspects of the problem. When a subject is presented with human flesh and then asked his price, the situation is likely to prove quite different from what happens when he is presented with printed stimuli and is expected to answer orally and not gastronomically."

in regard to nationalities, they do not state their "attitude" in respect to coloured persons. When, therefore, all these points are taken into consideration, it appears that so far as a more exact compulation of the situation is concerned, the 40 per cent. "aversion" must be a considerable under-estimate of it. It affords merely a minimal indication of a reaction whose maximal content might be assumed on the basis of the facts to cover as many as six out of every ten persons or families covered in this survey.

### 3. SOME SOCIOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In proceeding to the sociological consideration of these results it is as well to issue a caveat which applies to all material of this kind. So far we have been dealing with objective facts, viz. so many persons have declared their objection against accommodating coloured people in their houses and homes. The question what inferences we are entitled to make from these facts or declarations is another matter. We may no doubt infer, for example, in the light of the supplementary information available, e.g. "NOT Coloured", "No Niggers", etc., that the reasons underlying such objections denote certain more or less widely held prejudices against coloured people. We may be equally justified in deciding on general *a priori* grounds that the reason for such objections is an aversion on the part of the individual parties concerned to the type of social and physical contact with a coloured person that his or her admission into the domestic circle would entail.<sup>1</sup> Or, as a variant on the former assumption, we may infer with less justification that such prejudices have an economic rather than a personal character, i.e. that as strangers to this country some doubt may be felt regarding the ability of coloured persons to pay. Of the three assumptions, the two former appear in the light of more general knowledge of the subject to be partly, if not wholly true; and so, with the above proviso, we may now go on to consider more precisely the social significance of the data themselves.

As a random sample of persons and families in London and the southern counties who are prepared to accommodate

<sup>1</sup> Compare the attitudes on this point described on pp. 235.

paying guests, the total of some 560 cases provided here may be regarded as statistically adequate. On general grounds, as well as from information provided in the register, it may be assumed that this type of family belongs to the "middle-class" section of our society, and this term is usually taken to mean that the persons concerned follow a clerical, managerial or professional form of occupation rather than a manual or artisan one, and that their incomes on the whole are fairly adequate to their needs. The motives which prompt such people to accept paying guests are in the main economic, social, educational, and even altruistic in varying degrees. The paying guest, as the phrase suggests, is one who expects, and even is expected to share to a lesser or greater degree the general social life of the family with which he resides. The extent of this intercourse varies, but, again using general terms, it means that the guest is accepted as a social equal both by the family itself and by the friends and acquaintances who are members of the familial social circle. The sociological implications of the matter are therefore fairly plain, although the extent to which they apply is of course somewhat variable. In many, if not in most, middle-class families in English society the upholding of social status is a very important consideration. One of the ways in which status can very easily be jeopardized is by inability to keep the social and the economic life quite apart. Obviously, a paying guest comes in the first place under the latter category, and hence to accept and even invite a person into one's house on a commercial basis is a somewhat risky procedure in terms of the social pattern, and one which can be accomplished successfully only by very careful attention to the regulations of that pattern. These suggest that the most effective way of keeping commercial considerations out of sight is to act as if they did not exist; hence the necessity of the guest being looked upon as far as possible as a "friend" of the family. Certain fairly well demarcated conditions must be fulfilled in this respect, for in order to find acceptance in any specific social group it is necessary for the person concerned to conform to the group's ideas on social status, appearance and mannerisms. In short, so far as the paying guest is concerned, it is all the more necessary that the unorthodox should be avoided, and in this respect the coloured person is undoubtedly unorthodox.

In the light of this consideration it seems almost tautologous to suggest that, granting the general assumptions made, the significance of the data themselves is more extensive than the immediate facts imply. The 560 odd cases examined represent a certain special section of the "middle class" which happens to be engaged in a quasi-commercial occupation. If our assumptions so far, and more particularly in the last paragraph, are correct, there is every reason for regarding the attitudes of the sample not in isolation, but as an index of the general attitudes in this respect of the class to which it belongs. Whether or not these individuals personally subscribe to such attitudes is for the moment immaterial to the general issue.

Consideration of the results shown in the other two categories, i.e. Landladies and Guest houses, offers further support for this claim, allowing, of course, for the possibilities of a far wider margin of error in the sampling of these groups. The "aversion" percentages were respectively: Guest houses some 56 per cent.; Landladies some 32 per cent. Here again, sociological analysis affords the best clue to the situation. In both cases the motive in seeking guests is fundamentally a commercial one, and from the point of view of both guest-house and boarding-house proprietor the factors which determine their attitudes are likely to be in accordance with economic interests. Speaking generally, a guest house or boarding house occupies a position socially intermediate between the large hotel and the private home. To a varying degree its function is to offer some sort of substitute for the latter. Guests take their meals more or less commensally and social proximity is often enhanced by the provision of a drawing-room or some form of common room in which they can mingle still further. The very fact that such public rooms are considerably smaller than the dining rooms and lounges in the larger type of hotel proper means that actual physical and social proximity between the guests is inevitably increased. From the point of view of the average proprietor of such an establishment the existence of a "friendly atmosphere" is highly important: indeed, to a considerable extent the welfare of his business is bound up with the degree to which his house is able to offer this substitute for the intimacy of home life. Just as obviously, the introduction of a person or of persons (for example, coloured people) whose presence is in any way unacceptable to the

majority of his existing guests may well bring about his ruin.<sup>1</sup>

In contrast to this, the situation in terms of the lodging house or Landlady category is somewhat different. Here, personal contacts between the lodgers are reduced to a minimum. In most cases the individual lodgers occupy single rooms or sets of rooms where they take their meals and remain during the time they are in the house. There is no public room wherein guests can mingle, and there is no social obligation upon individual guests other than what might be enjoined by a brief meeting on the stairs or in the hall. In other words, however objectionable the individuality and presence of a specific lodger in the house, the possibilities of his constituting a problem for the other lodgers, and hence to the proprietor, are considerably fewer. In addition, there are differences of a purely economic and business nature between the running of a guest house and a lodging house which mitigate still further the dependence of the proprietor of the latter upon the good will of his tenants. In the light, therefore, of this further example it seems once again that the data in question indicate not so much the personal attitudes of the persons directly concerned, i.e. guest-house and lodging-house proprietors (although this consideration cannot altogether be ignored), but rather a particular situation in our society. More particularly, as we have already suggested, they are the reflection of certain social attitudes towards coloured people.

#### 4. SUMMARY

A random sample of some 700 private families, guest houses and lodging-house proprietors showed a definite objection on the part of some 40 per cent. of the sample to accepting coloured students in their homes and houses. This percentage, as consideration showed, might well be expected under a more ideal experiment to expand to one of some 60. How far this observable antipathy against coloured people may be specifically directed

<sup>1</sup> For an excellent exposition of such a boarding-house situation see Keate Weston's book *London Fog*, p. 84. On the same subject, Dr. Edwyn Bevan writes in the *Spectator* (1931): "To be fair one should recognize that the proprietor of a boarding house who refused admittance to an Indian may not himself be narrow-minded, nor the people actually resident in the house. . . . In the competition between boarding-houses to secure inmates, each proprietor has (for his pocket's sake) to think not only what his actual boarders object to, but what might be the handicap in securing future boarders. If he knows that *some* people object to having a non-European in their company, that is enough to make him refuse one admittance."



it is impossible from the bare data to say, although the evidence is perhaps sufficient to indicate some slightly greater degree of aversion to persons of Negroid stock than any other. On further examination of the data it was decided on sociological grounds to regard the material as an index of certain attitudes current in the "middle-class" section of our society towards coloured people as a whole. The data are scarcely sufficient for specific differentiation between the various elements which go to make up this social class; but, assuming the original assumption to be correct, there is good reason to suppose that aversions against coming into close social and physical proximity with a coloured person are at least as strong, if not stronger, among the wealthier, the more highly educated, and the ecclesiastical groups, as among any other members of this social stratum.

TABLE I  
*Approximate Scale of "Aversion"*

(Figures denote number of "aversions" in each case)

	Europeans only . . . . .	3
	White race only . . . . .	2
	Coloured could/might perhaps be taken . . . . .	3
	Coloured, only with high recommendations . . . . .	3
	No Coloured except ——— . . . . .	3
Coloured in general	Preferably no coloured . . . . .	4
	No coloured, if possible . . . . .	1
	No one very dark . . . . .	1
	Any, except yellow or black . . . . .	1
	Any, not black . . . . .	1
	No coloured . . . . .	224
	Any not coloured . . . . .	13
	No black . . . . .	1
	No coloured . . . . .	1
	NOT coloured . . . . .	1
Africans	Any, except Africans . . . . .	1
	Any, but negroes . . . . .	3
	No Negroes . . . . .	1
	No niggers . . . . .	1
Indians	Nice Hindus might be taken . . . . .	2
	Indians if very nice . . . . .	4
	No Indians . . . . .	4
	Any, except Indians . . . . .	4
Eastern	Japanese, if very nice . . . . .	1
	Might take Japs . . . . .	1
	Not Asiatics . . . . .	7
	Any but Orientals, Eastern . . . . .	13

TABLE 2  
"Aversions" by Districts

LONDON	No. of cases considered	Percentage of "aversions"
<i>West Central:</i>		
Bloomsbury . . . . .	34	41.2
<i>North-West:</i>		
Highgate, Muswell Hill, Golders Green, Hendon, etc. . . . .	45	43.2
<i>Hampstead</i> . . . . .	73	52.7
<i>South-east:</i>		
Blackheath, Sydenham, etc. . . . .	33	37.0
<i>South-west:</i>		
E. Sheen, Kew, Surbiton . . . . .	31	39.0
<i>West:</i>		
Chelsea, Victoria, Bayswater, etc. . . . .	120	52.5
	336	
EXTRA-LONDON (mainly southern counties)		
<i>Herts, Surrey, Essex, etc.</i> . . . . .	63	35.0
<i>Kent</i> . . . . .	44	43.2
<i>Sussex</i> . . . . .	73	40.0
<i>Oxford and Cambridge</i> . . . . .	54	35.2
<i>South-western, etc.</i> . . . . .	131	36.6
	365	
	Totals (percentage terms)	
"Aversions"	Take any	Blanks
<i>London</i> . . . . .	44.2	12.8
<i>Extra-London</i> . . . . .	37.3	15.6
<i>Whole London</i> . . . . .	40.2	14.3

TABLE 3  
"Aversions" according to Category

LONDON	As per cent. of sample	Per cent. indicating "aversion"
Private individuals or families . . . . .	80.0	52.1
Landladies . . . . .	11.3	36.1
Guest Houses, etc. . . . .	8.7	61.0

TABLE 3—*continued*

## EXTRA-LONDON

Private individuals or families . . . . .	85.5	39.0
Landladies . . . . .	11.4	31.2
Guest Houses, etc. . . . .	3.1	45.5

*Total Sample\**

Private individuals or families . . . . .	82.5	44.1
Landladies . . . . .	11.3	32.4
Guest Houses, etc. . . . .	6.2	56.4

\*The following may also be noted:

	<i>As per cent. of sample</i>	<i>Per cent. indicating "aversion"</i>
The Higher Educated . . . . .	13.1	41.3
Clergy . . . . .	3.0	47.6

TABLE 4  
*Nationality Preferences\**

LONDON	
"Europeans" . . . . .	44
French . . . . .	18
Germans . . . . .	13
"Scandinavians" . . . . .	11
Dutch . . . . .	9
Swiss . . . . .	6
Swedes . . . . .	3
EXTRA-LONDON	
"Europeans" . . . . .	22
Germans . . . . .	23
French . . . . .	20
Swedes . . . . .	19
"Scandinavians" . . . . .	10
Dutch . . . . .	8
Danish . . . . .	5
Americans . . . . .	4
Austrians . . . . .	5
<i>Total Sample</i>	
"Europeans" . . . . .	68
French . . . . .	38
Germans . . . . .	36
Swedes . . . . .	22
"Scandinavians" . . . . .	21
Dutch . . . . .	17
Danes . . . . .	8
Americans . . . . .	7

\* The totals here shown were obtained by counting as one score each mention of a nationality in the Questionnaire query "Nationality Preferred", and by making the qualification for "entrance" that the specific nationality should occur at least once as first choice, e.g. answers read—"French, Germans, Danish, Dutch," etc.

## APPENDIX II

### A NOTE ON THE CINEMA AS A FACTOR IN RACIAL ATTITUDES

It would be extremely interesting, were it possible, to assess the exact significance of various cultural forces, and in particular of the cinema, in contributing to the prejudicial attitudes already described. Several students in America have made a similar attempt in the context of racial prejudice, but with one or two exceptions little work has been done in this country. Dr. G. H. Green, who used attitude tests on several thousands of Welsh school children, reports that roughly 10 per cent. of "sources for information" regarding national and racial groups were attributed to the cinema.<sup>1</sup> He comes to the conclusion that

"a whole body of prejudice has been made definite by the 'dope' film, and the films of the Dr. Fu Manchu series. . . . I ought, perhaps, to add that we do not, however, regard the film as creating racial prejudice; but rather as functioning in the same way as other agencies in making specific and definite something which already exists."<sup>2</sup>

In an experiment carried out in Illinois by Thurstone, it was demonstrated that the attitudes of an American film audience towards a people with whom they are unfamiliar was modified considerably according to whether the films depicting the latter were favourable or unfavourable in terms of subject matter.<sup>3</sup> Commenting further on the influence of the cinema, another American writer, William Albig, remarks:

Relations between nationalities, class groups, occupational groups, character groups, and the like, are modified by the opinions they express about them. . . . To a considerable extent the motion pictures have determined how people visualize these types and the opinions. . . .

. . . The adult audience adversely judges the statesman, economic

<sup>1</sup> Communicated to the writer by Dr. G. H. Green, who mentions that the sources of alleged rationalizations in this respect were as follows:

About 50% were ascribed to Books read.

Roughly 10% each to Home Experience, Newspapers, School and the Cinema.

A negligible amount to religious sources; and these practically all hostile judgments, obviously traceable to missionary propaganda.

<sup>2</sup> G. H. Green, *Geography*, vol. 16, 1931, pp. 51-53. "Racial Prejudices among School Children."

<sup>3</sup> L. L. Thurstone, "The Measurement of Social Attitudes", *Jour. Abn. Soc. Psych.*, 1931-32, vol. 26, pp. 248-69.

adviser, scientist and business man of the news reel on the scale of values developed in part from the feature pictures. And the individual may be imbued with a firm conviction of the truth and reality of his stereotypes because they are *vivid, personal and reiterated* (my italics)—he may have seen Warner Oland as Charlie Chan in ten pictures, thus fixing his stereotype of Chinese. Such personal stereotypes are convincing to the common man. Printed descriptions are rarely so vivid. And it is just this sense of reality that may be so dangerous to a logical analysis and re-examination of one's opinions. Thus distortions may become even more permanent than heretofore.

Superficiality may be disarmingly convincing when provided in pictorial form. There is a sense of completeness and profundity that is not actually justified. . . . The usual motion-picture interpretation is almost entirely in personal terms. Yet this personal motivation so definitely fits into the pre-conceptions of the common man that he finds no incongruity and complacently augments his preferences for personal interpretations.<sup>1</sup>

The following facts may now be assessed in the light of the above observations.

By far the greater proportion of films shown in British cinemas are produced in the United States. A very rough estimate is that approximately two out of every seven visits to the cinema will include a pictorial representation of the American Negro.<sup>2</sup> The Negro in these cases is always shown in a menial and servile capacity, and in occupations which leave no doubt about his social status. He is depicted invariably as a Pullman car attendant, a porter, a waiter, a manservant, an odd job man, and even in the boxing ring (where other precedents seem particularly obvious) he is rarely, if ever, anything more than a sparring partner. The position of his wife and children is seen to be similar. Negro women on the screen are cooks, parlourmaids, nurses, etc. Negro children sometimes receive slight elevation of status when they are shown at play with white children, but it does not continue up to adolescence. The general psychology of the Negro is delineated similarly on unvarying lines. He is of a good-natured, easy-going temperament, and is intensely superstitious with a peculiar fear of ghosts. His "best" quality is undoubtedly his faithfulness, but he also possesses a number of mannerisms, and one of these is a trick of rolling the eyeballs.

In the great majority of films in which coloured people are depicted more extensively, the actual "Colonial" scene or setting serves merely as a background for the working out of a purely European plot in which the presence of the coloured

<sup>1</sup> W. Albig, *Public Opinion*, p. 385.

<sup>2</sup> A slightly conservative estimate on the basis of some fifty visits, as far as possible "at random", to the cinema.

people themselves is partly or wholly incidental. The African "native", for example, is shown as the conventional "barbarian", semi-naked, painted, and often grotesque in his make-up. His activities are depicted as warlike, sometimes cannibalistic, and invariably of the most uncouth character. Under more "settled" conditions, he is shown as a servant to Europeans, as an unskilled worker in the mines, etc.<sup>1</sup> Occasionally, a Paul Robeson film depicts him in a somewhat more dignified, albeit "tribal" rôle, but films showing the Negro living under "civilised" conditions and living and acting in a way approved by the standards of normal European behaviour are virtually non-existent, in either "long" or "short" form.

<sup>1</sup> The above paragraph is based on a personal survey of film reviews and synopses over a period of five recent years, almost entirely from periodicals of the British Film Institute.

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